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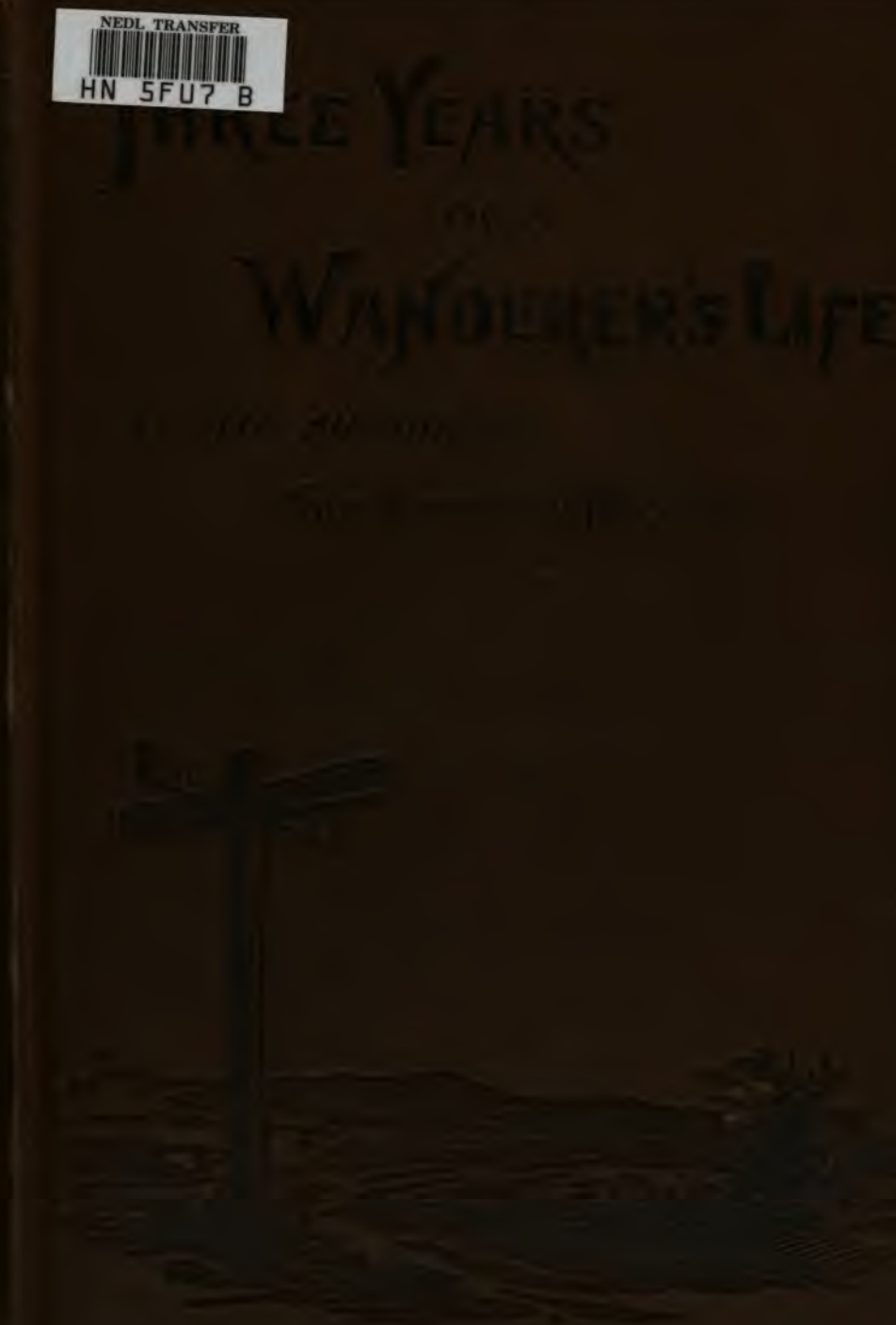
THREE YEARS OF A WANDERER'S LIFE



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THREE YEARS

OF A

WANDERER'S LIFE.

THREE YEARS

OF A

WANDERER'S LIFE.

BY

JOHN F. KEANE,

AUTHOR OF

'SIX MONTHS IN MECCAH,' 'MY JOURNEY TO MEDINAH,' ETC.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:

WARD AND DOWNEY,

12, YORK STREET, COVENT GARDEN, W.C.

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PREFACE.

I AM not writing "memoirs" at the age of thirty under the impression that I have any record of great general interest to offer, or any very extraordinary adventures to narrate. On the contrary, it is my knowledge of the many who are passing through similar experiences that encourages me to hope my circumstantial narrative may possess interest for the public.

J. F. KEANE.

Kiltrellig, Kilbaha,
Co. Clare.
March, 1887.

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THREE YEARS

OF

A WANDERER'S LIFE.

CHAPTER I.

INTRODUCTORY.

"JAQ. . . . . In his brain,—
Which is as dry as the remainder biscuit
After a voyage,—he hath strange places cramm'd
With observation, the which he vents
In mangled forms."

As You Like It, Act II., sc. 7.

CARLYLE has said, "All men are interested in any man if he will speak the facts of his life for them.' In that belief, and upon that condition, I set out to endeavour to interest the reader. I fully realize what I am undertaking. I am aware that there will be no ordinary call upon my courage to tell

some of the facts of my life—not from reluctance to confess folly or failure. The criminal and unsuccessful find a melancholy satisfaction in the confessional; but the dread I feel of appearing to whine or fish for sympathy when recounting what are mere everyday hardships to many—that, I perceive, will be my greatest bar to candour, and my greatest temptation to gloss over disagreeable episodes. Lest some morbidly compassionate reader or reviewer should feel disposed to condole with me at any time on my hard lot, I will take the precaution of announcing at once that no one will be thanked for any cheap pity. In this case I trust I may extend the principle of nothing being "ill said until it is ill taken," to nothing being ill taken until it is ill said. Had I the time to live over again, I would ask nothing better than to encounter the same instructive vicissitudes. I wear the boot, and know where it nips; but, remembering Friar Laurence's admonition—

> "Be plain, good son, and homely in your drift;
> Riddling confession finds but riddling shrift"—

I promise the reader no half-confidence.

One explanation is due, in justice to myself. It will no doubt be frequently wondered how the author came, in the first instance, to be under the necessity of placing himself in the very equivocal positions, to say the least, he sometimes occupies. This is the story, and there is no other:

At twelve years of age I went to sea, and followed it up until I was twenty-three, when I became possessed of means sufficient to allow me to choose other and more inviting lines. I matriculated in the Edinburgh University, and took up medicine, which I studied for three years. My source of supply was, unfortunately, an Irish one, which failed with the rent, and I was thrown entirely on my own resources; hardly with the millstone poverty about my neck, though assuredly with the tin-kettle necessity at my tail—an incitement which has kept me running ever since, even though without a goal. For the seafaring life holds out no prospects to me, my foreign service and broken voyages not counting as time at sea qualifying me for examination in the higher grades. I

may cling to the hope that when I have gained the practical experience and wealth of Lord Brassey, master mariner, I may be able to induce the Board of Trade to stretch a point in my favour, and allow me to present myself to be examined for a mate's certificate. We must turn to Laputa to find anything like it. I would rattle peas in their Balnibarbian ears, but that I know they are too old to learn, if I did manage to wake them up.

Along the career on which I have been urged I have seen many phases of life, most frequently from the point of view of those who endure them without a voice to speak for themselves. As I experienced them, I shall, as far as in me lies, avoid letting my own experience warp my judgment, taking up merely the attitude of an umpire skilled in the game, perhaps at times taking on myself the duties of Dean Swift's flapper.

That remedies for the grievances that have come under my notice are not far to seek, a parable may serve to show.

A man came into possession of a very famous

horse which had never been beaten, and which was universally believed to possess every good quality that a horse could. In a short time its good points began to disappear, the animal developed vices, and was placed nowhere by most inferior stock. It became worse and worse. It backed, jibbed, and refused, finally getting so much out of condition that it seemed on a fair way to the knacker's.

All available veterinary skill and science was brought to bear on the case; many and many a vaunted specific and nostrum was tried in vain; the poor beast suffered balls, blisters, clysters, and setons, until a consultation of collected wisdom gave him over.

At this point a stable-boy, with little special training, and no standing in science which would give weight to his opinion, offered a suggestion. He was at first listened to with the contempt his presumption merited.

"You might try oats," said the practical youth.

His prescription, however, proved to be the right

one. Nothing whatever was the matter with the horse but starvation.

If the reader should come upon a case diagnosed as obscure, he will be pretty safe if he "tries oats." That the case of the British seaman is precisely that of the horse, I can prove to demonstration by quoting a few extracts from one of Captain Shaw's forms :

"Candidates for appointment as Firemen must be Seamen ; they must be under the age of 30.

"Candidates must produce their certificates of birth."

And then we come to the oats—

"The pay of men on first joining is 24s. per week, and it rises to 27s. 5d., 30s. 10d., 34s. 3d., 41s., and 47s. 9d.

"Uniform is supplied, and there is a liberal arrangement for gratuities and pensions."

The character of the Brigade, and the manner in which this large body of English seamen, controlled by a capable master, perform their duties in a great city, is well known to be such as in any unprejudiced opinion must vindicate the character of the whole class, and should once for all silence those grab-all owners and incapable officers defiling

their own nest by traducing men who have made them and their country. Oats, and the fact that Captain Shaw is a gentleman and an officer who does not work a willing horse to death, is the secret of the ease with which his and similar forces are recruited from among the scanty remnants of our seamen. There are now in the London Fire Brigade alone a number of staid, trained, or veteran seamen large enough to man one hundred merchant ships. The chief reason why it is next to impossible to get together from the ordinary engaging depôts an English crew for even a small merchant-vessel, is that the pay offered will not provide for the absolute necessaries of life in the meanest home. As the wages have stood for some years, they are quite high enough for foreigners; for what it costs to keep a poor family a twelvemonth in England would make a man an independent landowner in Norway. Besides, a foreigner is not worth more than half as much as an Englishman on board a ship.

One of the many grave errors, the outcome of

the prolicidal mania which has possessed England during the last two decades, was the culpable folly of ever sanctioning the employment of men who could not speak English in any higher capacity than that of "ordinary seaman" on board an English ship.

I see no mischief in their coming to us in shoals, if they will only become naturalized and remain among us, adopting our customs. To a State like England a productive citizen must always be an acquisition. The evil lies in their going home to their own countries just as they have acquired our language and are beginning to be useful to us, taking all the knowledge and experience they have picked up from us, to be employed in their own country to our disadvantage in commercial competition, and probably some day in a sterner and more vital contest. It is a rare thing indeed to come across a master of a ship or petty officer of a man-of-war under any flag of Northern Europe who has not sailed long enough under the union-jack to speak English with toler-

able proficiency. Foreigners are seldom met sailing out of British ports over thirty years of age. About the prime of life they leave their places to be filled up by fresh hoards of raw Teutons and Scandinavians. I shall endeavour, as I proceed, to show how very simple measures, perfectly compatible with the requirements of our constitution as it exists, might be taken to remedy in some way this state of things, and lay a foundation on which a *British* mercantile marine might be again built up. But, at best, it will take a much longer time to get the manning of our ships out of the hands of foreigners than it has taken to oust our own countrymen. As an item of evidence that the English sailor is really on the verge of disappearing before the ocean invasion of the whole of the rest of Europe, it may be noted that of all the ships I shall be called upon to introduce, but two carried crews made up of the greater number of Englishmen, and I have not for ten years seen a ship of more than five hundred tons with a crew entirely British. There are other points at which "the

world is out of joint," which I shall not shrink from showing in as sound and common-sense a light as I can place them in. It is an old, old story, that of Judas controlling the funds; but I do not believe the whole brotherhood to have been corrupted by being treated to dips in the bag, nor do I believe that the old reproach, "the nearer the Church the farther from God," invariably holds good. Still, I have learnt that genius is not the only thing misapplied, and that self-supporting institutions are too often burdened with more than their own weight. It is impossible for me to make personal charges, yet I need not fear to indicate clearly the corporate bodies I expose, and shall be glad to meet and publicly refute any individual defender who may care to take me up. Some of my story will have about it, I am conscious, an air of improbability; but in every instance where I have recognised such an appearance, I have taken the liberty, to the verge of indiscretion, of giving the name of the captain of the ship, or other reliable witness, with corroborative data such as

can without difficulty be investigated. I am writing out of the way of newspaper files or reference books, so that little almanac, less history, and no guide-book must be looked for in these pages. The often inconsequent nature of some of my incidents will be owing to the fact that though taking my courses generally in their proper chronological order, uninteresting intervals may sometimes be bridged over by a little irrelevant matter, or perhaps a seemingly uncalled-for reminiscence. Such will crop up as inevitably as misprints; my erratic memory has a trick of jolting my elbow and sending my pen spluttering all over the paper. Might I suggest to the reader, that, whenever he comes to an apparent hiatus or interrupting anecdote, he should consider he has skipped a page more than he intended to; I don't suppose it will make much difference to him, though I should prefer my running-gear "unrove" and overhauled before it is condemned. Vulgar at times I cannot help being; a silk purse cannot be made out of a sow's ear, and the tightest ship must always carry a little bilge-water

in her bottom, if it has to be pumped in to season the timbers. Then, perhaps, the happiest lesson taught a man in living with and mixing among men of all conditions is that if human nature is the same all over the world, *the normal man is good,* and wrongdoing is everywhere very rightly characterized as unmanly, unnatural, inhuman, and the like. A pessimist view of human nature may be held by the narrow-minded and self-satisfied; let them stagnate in their other worldliness. I prefer to have faith in Henry George and the Emperor of Russia; they are up and doing. Admit the existence of a second generation of the race in advance of the first, and it follows as a corollary that men must have done that which, as the Church Service puts it, is "expedient for them" to do. I may be fated to wade through mud until I skip the last gutter, though I shall not stay to wallow in it, nor drag anyone through it after me.

Before I am set down as an example of the abnormal, I will close my introductory remarks.

CHAPTER II.

Calcutta—Snakes—Watching the Breath out of a Nigger—Native Cunning—Shipwrecked—Diving for Salvage.

"I AM but mad north-north-west;" give me credit for being wise on the other thirty-one points of the compass, I shall feel as well off as most of my neighbours. To a sailor, how completely the Prince of Denmark has defined his mental condition in those few words, and how supererogatory the folios of discussion on the psychological phenomena exhibited in the character of Hamlet appear! But the controversialists have never been sailors; depend upon it, Mr. W. Shakespeare, dramatist, was. He wore earrings and a nautical cut of beard; was never at home, yet never changed his address. He has written more genuine seamanship than any other writer in the English language (excepting Marryat), never producing a work that did not

contain *seaman-like* nautical phrases and allusions. Here is a crumb for the Shakespearean exegete, (a new direction for the researches of the biography-snatcher, opening up the most seductive possibilities,) who ought to be able to find an entry in a fragment of Admiral Drake's log-book like this: "Ye canvas climber, Billee Shakspur, did cry 'Quake, quake' foranent ye Admiral, for the whilk greete offence he hent ye high and giddy mast to stoi there. He did presentlie fall asleep, rocked in ye cradle of ye rude imperious surge." The inspired originator of this idea, which he foresees must make him famous, is going to take the best of care that none of his personal career shall remain obscure to posterity. He has far too great a sympathy in the enlightened research of other people's grandchildren to leave his most discreditable proceedings unrecorded. I am taking up my autobiography pretty much where I dropped it in "Blue Water," and pursuing it with equal veracity, and I hope to receive an equally kind reception.

It was just after the rains in the year eighty-

three that I found myself in Calcutta, second-mate of the English steamship *Deucaledon,* and proprietor of a nasty fit of dengue—pronounced dingy, on account of its being generally contracted in the boats on the river. "I am but mad north-north-west," as a rule; but I was mad all round the compass then. It was as good a dose as any man in search of a novel experience need wish for. I was under the doctor engaged to attend the ship. He was known as Dr. "Take Two," from some pills which he carried, and always administered with those words, for all diseases; and he tried to persuade me that there was nothing the matter with me. Accustomed to sailors, who are hard to kill, the *rôle* had probably become habitual with him; but I knew better. I was sick; I lay on my bed for days, and groaned at every move. Every muscle in my body seemed to have sustained lesion; the pain in all my joints was like rheumatism. There are few sicknesses in which a man suffers so much acute general pain, without pronounced outward symptoms to provoke sympathy,

as he does in the dengue. I tried all the remedies suggested by gentlemen who had "been thirty years in the country and speak the language, sir." I underwent an iced-water cure, a whisky-and-water cure, and a no-water cure, until I felt that though the disease is very seldom fatal, the later cure very soon would be. At the pressing request of my nowker (a native boy engaged to attend on me while in the country) I tried one of the "panchamritas," or five infallible specifics said to be in the possession of a native doctor. He was a Bengali baboo, qualified at the Medical College, Calcutta, but set forth in his advertisement that he had, after qualifying, travelled for seven years in the Himalayas, meeting an immortal sage in a marvellous Eden-like valley—a mountain fastness—it took two years of the most terrific climbing to reach. The baboo weighed fourteen stone, if an ounce, and was short-winded. The immortal had communicated the secret of the "panchamritas" to him. I sent for this very fair representative result of our system of educating the baboo, and

let him tell the whole lie to me without remorse, until he inadvertently spoke the truth, saying he had never had the honour of treating a Sahib before, but he thought the sahibs were so strong that they would require a double native dose. He had been interesting up till then, so I told him to change the subject. He suggested a little blood-letting, so I changed it again by asking him if he had a soul. He said he had a pineal gland. I paid him his fee, eight annas, for medicine and visit, and then placed myself in the hands of Dr. Pilcher, of Howrah. I went into the hospital there, as Dr. Pilcher has the best reputation among sailors of any physician in Calcutta. I shall certainly never forget the way he put me on my legs. I had been so long unable to walk that when I saw coolies carrying burdens, it used to make me laugh—the thing seemed so ridiculously inconceivable to me, such an impossible performance—so distant seemed I from ever being able to do the like; yet a fortnight after I entered the Howrah Hospital, I was on my feet taking short walks on the Maidan.

The accepted derivation of the name Calcutta is from Khali Ghat, one of the river-bunds or bathing and pooja steps near, sacred to the goddess Khali; but the hypercritical baboo has another derivation. He says that when the English were first granted a concession of land to erect their trading station on, a district of impenetrable, impracticable jungle was given them on the present site of Fort William, which, it was believed, they would be able to make nothing of. But the English sailors, with characteristic energy, came on shore and cleared the jungle in one day. Some natives, on inquiring next day how long it had taken to do, were informed that it had been "cut yesterday"—Hindi, "Kal catta"—which so tickled the indolent natives that they always after spoke of it as Kal-catta. Which derivation is right, I would not undertake to argue; but the baboo's story certainly displays a strongly native turn in the humour of it. Howrah, however, it was that led me to think of the jungle. With the exception of the old P. and O. compound at Garden-reach, next

to the King of Oude's Palace, in whose garden hundreds of snakes are artificially reared from the eggs, Howrah is the snakiest bit near Calcutta. On one of my first attempts to walk out of the hospital, assisted by a native bearer, I was slowly and painfully dragging my feet after me along a gravel path across a grassy plain, upon which the hospital is built, when I shuffled some gravel into the drain by the side of the path; instantly from the place the gravel had fallen out grew a great gray cobra on to the grass close at our sides. I say *grew*, because that best describes the singular motion, the swift coming forth without visible effort, of a disturbed snake from his hole or shelter. After facing us a moment, he started off at top speed across the grass. I saw if he kept his direction he would have to cross four hundred yards of closely-mown sward before he would reach cover. The hunting instinct came strong upon me; I forgot my pain and weakness and gave chase. A cobra doing its best appears to be going like a rabbit, but really makes no more progress than

a man walking fast, so that I soon came up with it, and brought it right about on its tail, facing me at two yards; head erect, two feet from the ground; hood expanded, mouth open, hissing furiously, and prepared to give me the death-stroke if I approached another foot. I had no stick or weapon; my momentary fictitious strength seemed leaving me; I felt I might drop down on the grass at any moment. I looked round; my bearer was standing where I had left him, imploring me to come back. There were lots of natives within hail on one road, all Hindus, none of whom would put a hand out against a snake; but about a hundred yards off, in another direction, I saw three small Mohammedan boys, one of them carrying a long bamboo. I called to them in Hindi:

"A big snake! bring the stick!"

They heard me, and the little fellows answered gleefully:

"Yes, sahib; strike! strike!" and set off running towards me.

When the snake saw my reinforcement approaching, he lowered his threatening crest, and again tried to make off. I had the bamboo in time though, and just managed to break his tail about a foot from the end, stopping his steerage way. At the same time I broke the bamboo, which was rotten across the middle. If disabled, he was still more than a match for me at close quarters; and now that he could not run he showed good fight. I gave the two biggest boys half of the bamboo each, and let them go in and finish him. The two youngsters soon battered the life out of the snake. I measured the body; it was four feet nine inches long—a good size for a cobra.

Before I leave Howrah, I may as well tell another snake experience I had in that Bengal Paradise.

I was visiting at a friend's house, and was on this evening sitting at dinner alone. The table had been laid some time waiting for the host, and I had at last received a note that he was not coming home, so sat down alone. I had finished dinner, and was still lingering at the table, when a little

mouse ran up on the top of a bowl with a sort of basket-work cover on it. I should not have thought that of itself very singular, for the "tribes on our frontier" made most unexpected incursions. But when he did get perched on the cover of the bowl, the little fellow rose upon his hind-legs, with his hands before him, and began to entertain me with the funniest little mouse-song you can imagine. "Chit-chit, cheep-cheep-chit," he whistled, and kept it up before me in a most unembarrassed and self-possessed little way. I must have been a trying audience, for I leant back in my chair and roared with laughter. As I looked at the little performer, I gradually became aware of a shadow, a something strange gliding out from behind a dish towards the mouse. Silently and slowly it neared the mouse; in another minute a beady snake's eye glittered in the lamplight. My hand stole softly for the carving-knife. The snake reared its head level with the mouse, and the poor little fellow's song, which had never ceased, became piercingly shrill, though he sat up rigidly erect and motion-

less. The head of the snake drew back a little to strike; out flashed the carving-knife. The spell was broken instantly, for the mouse dropped and scampered. The snake was wounded, for there were spots of blood on the table-cloth, and it was writhing about among the dishes and plates. I could not make a bold stroke at any part of it for fear of breaking the crockery, and wherever I made a dig with the point it was like pricking the garter. I would not have believed, until I had seen it, how much of himself a snake can stow away under the edge of a plate. At last I saw the end of his tail projecting out from under a dish. A snake held by the tail and swung rapidly round cannot turn back and bite. I grabbed the tail with my left thumb and finger, and drew him out until I judged the middle of his body to be under the knife; then I came down and cut him in two. He was another cobra—a little one about two feet long, but quite long enough to "gravel" a man.

I have to return to the hospital again, however.

In the ward in which I was were two other patients—an old negro and a sailor.

The negro was an old resident in the country, who had risen to a position of moderate independence. He was a West Indian, one of that large colony of West Indian and American negroes settled in Calcutta. So many of them are there that a company of volunteers is formed entirely of them. The conditions of life suit them, and the climate agrees with them, so that they wish for no other home, and are sure to remain in the country if employed. They supply a want, and are encouraged, for they make the best of coolie-drivers, having plenty of bluster, but seldom resorting to actual violence. They usually marry native Christians, and can live comfortably on much lower wages than could be offered to a white man. They can be depended upon to fill efficiently situations of some small responsibility, which cannot be trusted to a native, and yet cannot be considered as worth the charge of a white man. They are always intelligent, and possess a certain

amount of education, and just that sense of right and wrong which can never be found in a native. The poor old negro who has led to this dissertation was at the point of death. He was dropsical; an operation had been performed, and if he survived the night another was to be performed next day. A bottle of brandy had been placed among the medicines at the head of his bed, and the attendant was told to give him a tablespoonful every hour through the night.

The sailor in the next bed to me, on the opposite side, was a thorough old web-foot. He was never known to me except as the "boatswain of the big American ship," and I always addressed him as "Boa's'n." There was not much the matter with him; he was convalescent, and expected to be going out in a day or two.

I noticed on this evening he seemed to be very uneasy in his bed; he rolled from side to side, threw his arms about, and I thought he must be getting worse again. As soon as the lights were put out, the attendant, whose duty it was to remain

in the ward all night, and who should have looked after the dying negro, disappeared, as was his custom every night, and we saw no more of him until morning. Only one of the thousand examples I could quote of the utter untrustworthiness of the native. I know there are a few European visionaries in India who profess an absurdly extravagant belief in the possibility of a native being sometimes capable of a sense of duty. It is fortunate for our rule that such people are an insignificant minority. Happily few are deceived. After a short term of intercourse nearly every official comes to be of the same way of thinking as a famous and accomplished Indian administrator whom I once heard remark, in casual conversation, "The idea of believing anything a native says!" in tones which showed he considered such a stretch of credulity as preposterous. In all that great man's distinguished career he never took up a position so absolutely unassailable. *Revenons à nos moutons*, black and white.

There was a dim night-light burning in the

room. The negro took a sip at his brandy. The boatswain raised himself up in his bed and peered over into my face. I said:

"What's up, Boa's'n?"

He seemed startled.

"Nothing; I thought you were asleep."

He then dropped back and lay quite still. After a time the negro took another sip at his brandy-bottle; then the boatswain turned round to me and said:

"It's quite likely that nigger 'll kick out to-night."

I said, "Hush!"

He muttered something I did not catch, ending with: ". . . . . darn'd shame."

I told him, "I supposed the doctor had done all he could for him."

But the boatswain kept grumbling and muttering away to himself, and would not go to sleep. I had determined to keep awake and see that the old negro took his dose as ordered. At last the boatswain turned to me and said:

"Great Scot! are you going to see that coon drink all that liquor? I ain't agoing to lie here and see him pis'n hisself."

The boatswain made a start to get up and go for the bottle. I saw what made the boatswain so considerate now. I might have suspected it before. I stopped him, now that I comprehended the little move.

"Look here, Boa's'n, that thing's too thin. You leave that coon and his bottle alone, or, I tell you straight, I'll let on to the doc. in the morning."

Then ensued a long discussion in undertones, the boatswain earnestly endeavouring to convince me that it was sinful to waste good drink on a half-dead negro, when he, a white man in every sense, could derive such benefit from it. I spoke in as low a voice as I could, and trust that the negro did not overhear us, for at length I agreed that if the negro died before morning the boatswain should have all the brandy left in the bottle. If ever the breath was watched out of a man's body, that sailor watched that poor nigger's. He

kept crawling round the foot of my bed, and up to the head of the dying man's, and listening to his breathing; he would then come back to me and whisper quite cheerfully, "I think he's going now."

After one of these visits I went over myself. The negro had not taken a sip for some time, so I outraged every better feeling of the boatswain's nature by trying to get the negro to take his brandy. I found he was really very far gone. He could not speak. I dropped a few drops into his mouth, hoping that the strong hot taste would make him go through the motion of swallowing. He did make a swallow, and I tipped the bottle up and a mouthful ran between his lips; but just at that moment he drew in his breath, and some of it went down "the wrong throat," which set him coughing and wheezing, so that I had to turn him over on his side instantly, to allow the brandy to run out of his mouth. I saw at once that my well-meant efforts had done more harm than good. I have no doubt I hastened his end a little. All this

time the boatswain had been grunting and squirming in his bed, and when I went back to mine he said:

"I'd have a little shame, if I was you. I've been running the likes of that into nets, and shooting 'em same as rabbits."

In a few moments the breathing really did cease, and the boatswain asked me, "I hope you're contented now," but he had hardly spoken when the breathing seemed to begin again. Two attempts the boatswain made to get the bottle, but I stopped him; until at last I went over and felt the negro's pulse, and determined that he really was dead; then, in sheer disgust, I told the boatswain that he might finish the brandy. No one came near the ward until daylight, when the proper attendant turned up and found the empty bottle returned to its proper place. The body was removed at once. The boatswain showed no signs of liquor, which was well, for had any questions been asked of me I should not have shielded either one or the other.

But I honestly confess that I lack the moral

courage to report any wrongdoing on the part of a native to his employer where it does not directly concern myself. Such is the influence native servants sometimes acquire by their depth of cunning, that a stranger interfering must inevitably get the worse. I have known a husband and wife hopelessly alienated for life through the machinations of an ayah. I had a lesson in youth that will last me my life. I was a young lad of fourteen, living with a relative in Madras. It was the mango season; several boxes of mangoes had been gathered in the compound for taking up to the hills with the family in a day or two. I had been at liberty to help myself from the trees to as many mangoes as I liked, and so when they had all been gathered I went to the butler and told him to give me some. He told me "Mem sahib wanted them." I made him tell me where they were, and abused him pretty freely for refusing to give them to me. I found three big boxes of mangoes in a "go-down" (outhouse), and took half-a-dozen or so and ate them. Three

days after, when Lady A—— was starting for the hills, she asked me, not unkindly, if I had been eating the mangoes in the go-down. I, of course, said yes, and there was no more about it. After Lady A—— had gone, her English maid, who stayed behind a few hours, came up to me and said: "The butler told her ladyship that you had eaten all the mangoes in the go-down, and there are none to take to the hills." The butler's revenge was perfect. He had got rid of the mangoes himself, and laid his plans so well that if it had not been for the English maid I should have been in a truly awful position: it must have appeared that I had stolen and gluttonously devoured about seven hundred mangoes in three days. That the maid did her best to clear me I know, but have no doubt that the butler's explanation was plausible enough to clear himself. My case, though a childish incident, shows the method; and nothing is more certain than that many a high Indian official has been ruined utterly, in the full tide of a successful career, by plots first set on foot

by some insignificant native employé, a chaprassi, possibly even a sweeper. "With as little a web as this will I ensnare as great a fly." I dread having to enter upon a course of recrimination with a native of India as I dread nothing else in life. I would let a native take the shirt off my back rather than appear against him in a court where I thought one word he said would be believed.

A gallant major had been compelled to take divorce proceedings against his wife. A native ayah was a witness on the other side. In cross-questioning, the ayah admitted that she had seen tears in the major's eyes when he was parting with his wife to go to Afghanistan.

"If Major ——— felt no affection for his wife, why was he crying?" questioned counsel.

"Because he had to go to the war," said the simple creature.

Thanks to Dr. Pilcher's treatment, I returned to the ship a complete cure, and soon began to lay on flesh. We sailed from Calcutta a few days after I joined the ship, calling at Colombo.

The loss of our dog at Colombo I think an incident worth recording, for there is a very general belief among unscientific people that sea-snakes are not poisonous. It was a fine Newfoundland dog, very fond of the water, and, seeing a snake at the surface, it went down to the bottom of the accommodation-steps, which was just awash, sprang into the sea, seized the snake in its teeth, swam back, regained the steps, and landed the snake on the quarter-deck. It was a true sea-snake, with flattened, oar-like tail, and slimy fringe along its back. Half an hour after the dog was dead—pretty good presumptive evidence that the snake had killed it.

Before I come to the rather prosaic shipwreck with which I shall be compelled to terminate my connection with the *Deucaledon*, I must give a description of the poor old tank, whose plates now lie reddening on the shores of Perim. She was a "ditcher"—a "canal wallah"—owned by one of the many mushroom companies that sprang up a few years ago and did such immense harm

to English commerce by ruinous competition, at rates far below such as any honest shipowner could afford to sail his ship at.

These small companies sent their ships to sea half manned, ill found in stores for both ship and crew; thus, by similar and even worse expedients, just managing to live long enough to dupe and plunder shareholders of sufficient capital to make it worth the promoters' and management's while. The loss of a vessel, though they were always highly insured, generally led to exposures which disorganized the company and threw them into the Court. Many people who can speak with authority blame the rash embarkation of so many needy speculators in small, unsecured ventures for a great deal of the depression in shipping which now exists.

The company to which the *Deucaledon* belonged owned two other steamers; and to show their extensive connection (or no connection), one of them was on a voyage to Quebec, and the other to the Brazils, while the *Deucaledon* had been two

months and a half on the berth at Calcutta. The latter was 1,200 tons register and 90 horse-power. Under pressure and the most favourable circumstances she could steam eight knots. That ridiculous farce, the load-line (which the landsman may not know can by law be put anywhere, so long as it is somewhere), was placed so high up that when loaded down to it, as she always was, the vessel was not quite as seaworthy and dry as a good pine-raft.

The captain was a young man—a pushing, dashing seaman, who had always been followed by luck, but was certainly not careful, if he was zealous. A bold man he must have been; for he had been for three years in the *Deucaledon*, and one winter voyage in her was enough to shatter any man's nervous system. He, however, seemed rather to like the excitement.

The chief officer was also a good seaman; but, like myself, he knew what a safe ship was, and had not been accustomed to going to sea in his coffin. He was a married man with a family. When the

Yara-Yara went ashore on the oyster-beds outside Newcastle, New South Wales, all hands were lost, and the lifeboat made no attempt to rescue. In the inquiry afterwards the captain of the lifeboat crew naïvely pleaded that he had not considered it *prudent* to put off on the night in question. Though prudence may be ridiculous in a lifeboat captain, our chief thought a little of it would do no harm in a steamboat captain or owner. The old fellow used to declare that as long as there was wind enough "to blow the scent off a milkwoman," he could not sleep a wink for anxiety.

The rest of the crew, excepting the chief engineer, had all been shipped in Calcutta, for we had not been able to keep the old hands by her. The latter had all taken a month's imprisonment with hard labour rather than complete their engagement with us. I did not blame them. Had I been one of the hands forward, I would have taken three months rather than stop in her. One of the men told the magistrate: "It must be a d——d hard prison that's worse than her!"

Calcutta is a place where ships lie at a landing, and is a large city where a magistrate can always be appealed to by sailors with a certainty of obtaining a fair hearing; and on this account captains now make it a rule to pay off such as they wish to get rid of, or such as fancy they have grievances, rather than go through the inconvenience, and sometimes exposure, attending a police summons. Consequently, good sailors are always to be found in plenty at Calcutta, the wages standing the same as at home.

Though our captain had sent his old crew to gaol (no doubt in compliance with his owners' instructions), and though he gave the lowest wages out of the port, yet we secured a crew of good men. When they came on board, they certainly were a wild, hungry-looking lot of hard-cases. They must all have been on the beach, or they would not have shipped with us. Once at sea, they improved, and showed what they were made of, as such men invariably do.

In nine cases out of ten a man who can take

care of himself on shore had better stop there; he is not likely to be much good at sea. As a matter of fact, no man who can hold his own on shore will go to sea as a sailor. It is all nonsense to try and make a saint of Jack ashore. You must remember that a merchant seaman is afloat eleven months and a half out of twelve, and the remaining half-month, if he gets as much, is his holiday on land. Many a landsman's holiday afloat is longer. Forgive him his trespasses on shore, as he forgives you yours on board ship. His is a very terrible life, and he never leaves the wreck until the passengers are landed. Believe me, it is only weak, incapable officers who prefer weak, incapable men, such as foreigners and landsmen, to good seamen of their own nationality. Give me the hardy, reckless English sailor, and I will undertake not to give him scope to break away.

That we had a few such men on this occasion did us some service. In a small steamer the entire responsibility of navigating is taken by the captain, the chief officer having enough to do to superin-

tend the executive, and only keeping the ship's reckoning after the event. Neither can the second officer do more towards the navigating of the ship than keep a look-out and the dead-reckoning during his watch, seeing that the captain's orders with regard to course, etc., are carried out.

As we were making for Perim on this our last night, I had kept watch from eight p.m. until midnight. It was a beautiful night, cloudy with no moon, but the atmosphere was as clear as a bell. We had a fine coal-saving breeze right aft, with the foresail and topsail set. The captain had told us he did not expect to raise the light of Perim until about four bells in the middle watch. As I returned to the bridge after heaving the log at ten minutes to twelve, the light of Perim flashed up bright and strong right ahead. The light is set down as visible at thirty miles, but by our reckoning it should still have been forty miles off at least. I called the captain, and reported the light; he came out on deck, but as it was not yet visible from the deck, which at the part he was standing on was almost

flush with the water's edge, the captain came up on the upper bridge to look at the light. He just took the bearing and went below again, saying as he left, "You could see that light any distance on a night like this;" which was quite true, for the light is an intensely powerful white light, which might be picked up from the mast-head at fifty or sixty miles. Shortly after this the chief relieved me. I told him the captain had been up, but had not altered the course. The mate looked at the light, and said he supposed "we must be forty miles off it, and seemed to be going all right." Such being the case, the rate we were steaming at should bring us up to the straits after daylight, which would have suited us well. I went below, and slept as soundly as I always do keeping watch and watch. At a quarter to four I was called, turned out at once, and dressed, only half awake. I was just rinsing my face with cold water to freshen myself up for the deck, when I was shot forward with my head right into the wash-hand-basin, and became aware of a most distressing

shaking, thudding row going on all round me. My first idea was a collision. I hopped out on deck, face streaming with soapy water. As soon as I reached the bridge I wiped my eyes and looked round. The man at the wheel near me said with a grin, "You've piled her up this time, sir." I did not deign to notice him, but turned to the mate, who was at the engine-telegraph stopping engines preparatory to turning astern or whatever the captain, who would be on the scene in a moment, might order.

The poor old mate, who was quite in a flurry, had heard the man at the wheel's remark to me, and by way of showing his self-possession, or leading the men to believe there was nothing the matter, sung out: "Get along that hose, men." It was usual for the watch going below at four o'clock in the morning to get ready the wash-deck gear for the watch coming on deck. They need not have troubled themselves that morning; the decks were getting washing enough by half-past four. The response to the mate's order was a mocking repe-

tition of his words from one of his men, showing a tendency to the subverting of discipline, which it takes a strong hand to maintain at such moments. So, unnecessary as I felt the order to be, I jumped down and saw the mate's command carried out smartly, which I think had a steadying effect. When I returned to the bridge the captain was there. He bore himself with coolness; though he must have been much agitated, he appeared quite collected. I saw him look over the side; the ship had no way on her. He then turned to the mate, and said: "She is bumping badly, Mr. ——." Then seeing me, he said: "Get sounding all round her, Mr. Keane."

As I left the bridge to take the soundings, I heard the engine-room telegraph ring, and supposed it would mean full speed astern, so went to the stern first to get the lead over before the engines started. I found seven fathoms under her heel; amidships on the starboard side I got two and a half; on the port side the rocks were visible; up and down the stem I got three fathoms. While

forward I noticed the men bringing up their things from below, and placing them on the forecastle head. I thought they were wise, but said nothing. On reporting soundings I saw the chief engineer and carpenter were on the bridge with the captain. It appeared that the engine-room was filling fast, and that the engines could not be started. The chief said it would be well to blow off steam at once while the valve could be reached. The smoke of the funnel, which had been very dense ahead, cleared away about this time, and the land became clearly visible right aboard us. The ship was fast settling down by the stern; she might slip off into deep water, and sink under us at any moment. To obviate this as far as possible, the captain ordered the mate to let go both anchors, and hold on the cables. Me he told to bring my watch, with all the firemen and idlers, and clear away the two lifeboats. On setting about the work I was glad to find the sailors were well in hand; they had all of them been cast away before under much more trying circumstances, and seemed to treat the

disaster very lightly. Some of the firemen, who were landsmen, were inclined to be insubordinate; but with the example of the sailors before them I had little difficulty in bringing them to their bearings, and letting them know that they could not do quite what they liked just yet. The mate came along with the other watch in a few minutes, so that in about a quarter of an hour after she struck we had the two lifeboats in the water alongside, and all hands in them. The captain spoke of staying by the ship until daylight, when a boat was to return to the ship for him. But the mate persuaded him to get the ship's papers and come with us, which he agreed to do on observing that the taffrail was under water, and the water rising rapidly up the quarter-deck, which was now so much inclined that it was difficult to stand on it.

As soon as the captain came into the boat we shoved off. As we pulled away we saw the old ship give a surge astern and subside with a splutter of fire and steam and a whirl of waves, until nothing was left above water but her topgallant-

forecastle spars and funnel. Day was now breaking, and we made for the beach, the captain knowing where to land from his recollection of the chart. Nobody on the island appeared to be up or aware of our predicament. There had been no necessity for our making any distress signals. We landed and, led by the captain, were making our way into the fort, quite as a little invasion, when we were stopped by a native sentry. I often wondered what on earth the Sepoys could find to do on the island, but I now found that all the works on the island had been constructed by them. The road had been made at different times by different detachments of native Indian troops stationed there, and notices are put up, "This part of the road was made by such and such a regiment at such a date." Our advent was reported to the English officer in charge, who came out shortly after and took us in. He was in mufti, very much so. He said he could provide us with dry clothes, but was sorry he could offer us nothing to eat but rice. As for drink, he said he could give us any-

thing, and as much as we liked. We wanted nothing just then; all the captain wished was to have his condition reported at Aden as soon as possible. As the men knew they could get a glass of grog, and as they had behaved very well, the captain allowed them a glass of "commissariat" all round.

By way of keeping the sailors out of mischief, he told the chief officer and myself to take the boats off again to the wreck, examine its situation, and see what could be saved. The idlers and firemen we left on shore to sun themselves and admire the natural beauties of by no means the least valuable, if most barren and desolate, bit of British possession that the flag flies over. They made better use of their time than seafarers generally do on shore. For they each and all gathered large collections of beautiful sea-shells, which abound on the shores of Perim. Some of them, I afterwards heard, received three or four pounds for their collections from the passengers on board the P. and O. steamer, in which they were afterwards sent home from Aden

as D.B.S.'s (distressed British seamen). The sailors we took off to the wreck, the mate and I taking our own watches in our respective boats. As we pulled out, the mail for Aden passed, and we saw signals exchanged with Perim, which we easily made out to have reference to our vessel; so that the news would be at Aden that night, and we hoped our release from the island would quickly follow. The wind was light, with hardly any sea on. We found the old craft's main-deck under water fore and aft. There were about two fathoms over the taffrail, and the water so clear that by putting your eyes just below the surface you could see as well—I was almost going to say as far—as above the surface of the water. Her forecastle head was above the gentle swell, so that we were able to take the men's things off dry, for which I was glad. Had they been washed away, it would have been very hard; it takes a sailor a good many voyages to get together his kit after he loses it. I then spoke for divers, and a man from the mate's boat and two from my own volunteered. The chief

allowed me to take three along with me, while he took the rest to unbend the foresail and topsail, unreave some light running gear, and float and uncover the third boat, for it was in the davits full of water, though not taken right under.

I first visited the chart-room on the bridge, which was clear of water, and took the instruments and glasses. Next, from the galley I secured cooking gear enough for all our wants on shore. I then passed a guess warp from the fore to the main rigging, and worked the boat over the wreck by it. I and one man dived several times into the captain's cabin, and took out two chronometers and all his instruments, some books, a photograph-album among them, and two tin cash or despatch boxes. We just swam them out of the cabin, made them fast to a small line, and rose to the surface, letting the man remaining in the boat pull them up. I did not allow the other man to enter the captain's cabin alone, as I did not know what valuables might have been left. The men with me were all my own countrymen, so that I was not

afraid of any villainy from them while under water; but all the same, I would not have trusted one of them alone with a gold watch. Among the poor in Ireland every kind of unfortunate meets with compassion but a dummy. "You never know what's in his mind," say they. That is very much my feeling towards a foreigner. "I never feel sure of what's in his mind." If I dived into a cabin under water with a foreigner behind me and a bag of money before, I should expect him to shut to the door and lock me in to drown. With my own countrymen, let them be the greatest ruffians unhung, I feel safe, for I think I can generally guess what they have in their minds, or, at any rate, I can always find out their feelings towards me.

When I had done with the captain's cabin I dived into my own cabin, and got out my gun-case; after that I took a rest, and let the other man go down into the mate's cabin. But the old mate said, as all his things were insured for their full value, he would have none of them; whether

the men found anything valuable in his cabin or not, I do not know—it was no business of mine. They recovered everything from my cabin; and I took the signal-bag to put my things in after I had dried them on shore. Then we went for the store-room. It was a three-fathom dive under two decks, so that it required a very level head.

We only had time to get down and bend on the first case or barrel that came to hand, then strike off for the surface again. In about four hours at this work we loaded the boat with bottled beer, flour, sugar, coffee not damaged with salt water, and tinned meats, so that we had provisions enough to start on a short voyage. During the last hour of our operations sharks had been gathering round, and getting bolder all the time; the water was so warm that a man might have stopped in all the day. I took the last dive with a shark close to the hatchway. I made a plunge going in to frighten him; but he just turned round, and then got right in the way again. I crowded past him; but on looking back on my way up, I saw him following

close after me. The men in the boat declared he made two or three snaps at me, but I think it must have been playfulness; if he had really meant it he could have taken lumps out of me whenever he liked.

After that we did not venture any more diving, but dressed, and the men rejoined their proper boats. The mate had done all he could some time before we had loaded our boat, and had only been lying by for us. So about noon we started for the shore, the mate towing the spare boat loaded with the gear he had been able to save. On shore we turned to, and laid out our camp on the sand, so that we would be near the wreck if we had any further opportunity. We pitched two good tents, one for officers and petty officers made from the topsail, and the other made of the foresail, for firemen and sailors. For the cook we rigged up a camp-fire in the open, and spent the afternoon broaching and examining the stores we had brought ashore; the captain told us that we had enough to go on "full and plenty," but that the water would be served out to us as

on board. I was the only one of the afterguard who had secured bedding—all the men had their blankets; but we took the boat-sails, which answered very well, to carpet our tent, and for covering for those who had no other. We made a good meal the first day, with a bottle of beer all round. We turned in early, most of us being tired out with the heat and exertion.

CHAPTER III.

Diving Extraordinary—Swimming Taught in One Easy Lesson—Meet Archibald Forbes—Perim Crabs—Marine Courts of Inquiry—A Narrow Escape.

"BLUFF is the game," said the gambler when he came in with a pair of Jacks, went ten better, and the other fellow threw down a full hand of Queens. "To and Fro" should have been the title of this book. To and fro is the game. I can come in and see that cabin-diving I have been giving you easily, and no bluff; for I am giving the correct name of the ship, and the captain is certain to see my hand. It was when I was second mate of an English barque, the *Fairy*, trading with coals between Newcastle, New South Wales, and Adelaide. We were just to the eastward of Bass's Straits. It had been blowing hard for twenty-four hours; but the wind had fallen away at noon to a very light

easterly breeze. The sea was running high and confused. One of the nastiest seas in the world is met with to the east of Tasmania in with the Australian coast. It is said to be owing to the strong current and foulness of the bottom. In wearing and filling away to the fair wind the patent log-line had got foul of the heel; that is, it had got between the lower part of the rudder and the sternpost. The captain tried to clear it himself by letting the sounding-leads run down the line as is usual, hoping to sink the line out of the place in which it was caught; but for some reason or other the line would not sink; and now there was our one patent log, worth three or four pounds, and all the leads in the ship, jammed somewhere under her bottom.

Thoughtlessly I said to the captain, "Pity it is not calm, sir; I'd go down and clear 'em."

He snapped me up at once. "Are you a good diver?" he said.

"I don't know about being a good diver, but I'm good enough for that, anyhow."

"If I heave the ship to, will you do it?"

I had not calculated on this, and began to be sorry I had spoken; however, I was committed, so I put a bold face on the matter, and said: "Certainly I will."

Sure enough the captain hove the ship to, but before I went off the stern he insisted on having a small line fast to me. I told him I wasn't a deep-sea lead, which was scathing, for he ought not to have been so cock-sure of his deep-sea lead move answering as to send them down without lines to pull them up again if they did not act. Truly I did not want to be hampered in the water with a lot of ropes. The captain was so urgent, that at last I consented to have a small log-line fast to my arm handy for casting off, which was fortunate, for the thing did nearly drown me in the long-run. The way was off the ship, and as her stern plunged down into a sea, I went off. Though the air was not cold enough to give me a goose-skin, as soon as I touched the water it took my breath away. The polar currents here make the water only four

or five degrees above freezing at this time of the year. It took me two or three minutes of frantic kicking and struggling at the top of the water before I warmed up and drew my breath evenly. Then I told them to give me line, and tipped over to swim down.

Now followed an extraordinary illusion. I was swimming straight down by the side of the ship's stern-post, on which the figures marking her draught were painted. The ship's stern was rising and falling ten or fifteen feet in and out of the swell. As the stern rose the figures flew up before my eyes like a flash, giving me a terrifying impression that I was flying downwards with a velocity of sixty feet a second; and then just as I, obeying an irresistible impulse, threw my arms out to stop myself, down past me flew the figures, and I was whisking upwards with lightning speed. Though the true cause of the appearance flashed across my mind at the first moment, so completely reason-overpowering was the illusion in its effect on me that I returned to the surface in ten seconds with-

out having been down more than six feet, and with a sense of having made a journey of hundreds of feet under water. But my blood was up. I told the captain to haul the line I was going down to clear taut up; then grasping it, I went hand over hand down it. When I reached the heel, I saw that the line was not foul between the rudder and stern-post, but was hung over a worked-out bolt-head in the lower gudgeon-strap, so that I had nothing to do but place my feet against the rudder-post, and bear it forward to clear it. As soon as it fell clear, the weight of the leads hanging to it swung me from some distance forward out under the projecting taffrail, and I felt, with a thrill, that I had taken a couple of turns round the weighted line with my life-line. I made three ineffectual attempts to run up as I had come down, but found myself jammed foul, nearly blown. I clenched my teeth, untied the line from my arm with a desperate calmness that nothing but a last chance at four fathoms under water could give a man. When I reached within a foot of the surface the air burst

from my lungs; but I inhaled no water, though I drank in the air afterwards for a minute or two before my heart ceased palpitating. I was far too excited to feel the cold, nevertheless the old man gave me a glass of hot whisky and water when I came on board.

I think that dive was the nearest I ever came to drowning. I believe I passed through all the agony. Another second, and my lungs would have been full of water, and unconsciousness, I imagine, would have supervened.

It was in the same ship I taught swimming in one easy lesson. We were lying alongside the wharf, Adelaide; it was Sunday, and great crowds of people were taking their afternoon walk looking at the shipping. Both the captain and chief mate were on shore. Some of our men had been ashore drinking, and returned to the ship very noisy. One of them came on to the poop and began to talk loudly. I heard him, and went up on deck, and told him to get forward at once, whereupon he turned upon me, and began abusing the captain, officers, and

ship, greatly to the amusement of the crowds on the wharf. I did not do anything rash; I just went and looked at the clock in the skylight, and said:

"Now, I'll give you one minute by the watch to get forward, and then it'll be you and me for it."

He would not take the warning, and his epithets became more opprobrious. So pretending to look at the clock—I did not notice then, and don't know to this day what time it really was—I told him the minute was up. He showed fight, so I closed with him, and tried to throw him down off the poop; but I found I had more than my match—he was not nearly so drunk as he pretended to be. I heard the crowd on shore laughing and cheering, and felt ridiculous. I thought "This won't do," and worked my man to the side. The poop-rail was very low. I thought for a moment, "Can I get him overboard alone?" Then I thought, "No; I'll make sure," and threw myself and him clean over the side.

He let go his grip of me in the water. I dived,

came up at the side ladder, and was on the poop again in half a minute. I looked for my friend in the water. There he was, making for the steps of the wharf with the most extraordinary frog's swim I ever saw. The crowd on shore were howling with laughter; but I felt a little serious, for I saw the man could not swim, and it was nothing but the air in his wet cotton shirt that was keeping him up. To my great relief he reached the shore; and then, to my greater satisfaction, he came straight on board and apologized for what he had done, thanking me for teaching him to swim in one easy lesson.

I knew the captain pretended not to approve of this American way of maintaining discipline, but in small ships it is sometimes necessary, and saves endless nagging and annoyance. I don't consider that a drunken sailor has any right to see the captain at all in a small ship until he has walked over the second and chief mates. It must be remembered that officers and men are thrown into such close contact, working together, that anything

in the shape of a superior distant bearing is laughed at; while threats of legal punishment at the beginning of a voyage place the penalty at such a distance that it carries no terrors at all, while few men will carelessly risk a personal encounter on the spot. The foot once put firmly down on that platform, a sensible moderate officer will have a peaceable ship.

Now that I am from the point, and before I return to my subject, I will record a gratifying encounter which happened to me while in Australia.

I was in the little port of Wallaroo as mate of the intercolonial trader *Verulam*. She was a famous old ship—one of the passenger-ships that in her prime had brought out many a couple that were now established, prosperous colonists, with grown-up sons and daughters that called their parents (after the ribald manner of the rising generation of corn-stalks) "Darn'd old importations."

A great many visitors came down to see the old

ship when in harbour. Among them, who should come on board one day when we were at dinner in the cabin but Archibald Forbes, conducted by a gentleman of great influence in Wallaroo, who was showing Mr. Forbes the lions of the place! Wallaroo consists of a copper mine, a smelting foundry, and a couple of hundred dwellings. Ours was the only ship there, and probably we were the big show of the place. When I saw Mr. Forbes come into the cabin, it was as though Fleet Street had been suddenly transported to Wallaroo. The leading inhabitant came in first without taking his hat off, or taking any notice whatever of us sitting at dinner; he pushed round the head of the table. Landsmen, even gentlemen, are prone to forget that a ship's saloon is a sailor's dining-room. Needless to say, Mr. Forbes took his hat off on entering the cabin of even a collier; he did more, he bowed to me at the head of the table, and, rather as an apology for intruding, said: "I heard this was the famous old packet *Verulam*, and so came to have a look at her."

I replied: "Oh, certainly, Mr. Forbes; but I'm afraid, as you see her now, she won't give you much idea of what she was in her better days."

Mr. Forbes just said "he had been told that the fittings were still the same," and I believe was going to pay us a compliment on the appearance of the ship, when he was hurried away by the Wallaroo village magnate. After having encountered and held quite a conversation with such a celebrity in such an altogether out of the way corner of the earth, I was sorry that the ship's duties prevented my hearing the lecture he delivered in the town that evening. A rather witty remark of a lady—I think I am right in ascribing it to Miss Ellen Terry—went the round some years ago. It was after being present at a banquet at which a great number of literary celebrities had sat down, and the observation called forth was: "I can understand anyone after reading a book wishing to see the author, but I can't understand anyone after seeing the authors wishing to read their books." That certainly tallies with my experience. Authors are seldom of a

promising presence, but in Mr. Forbes's case I did not see one of my idols shattered. I have seldom seen a man who in a few moments fascinated and impressed one with the conviction that he was remarkable, or whom one could at once realize as having actually lived amidst the stirring scenes his pen has drawn for us. I have interpolated the foregoing incident because I found myself in Australia; and as I am not to return to the land of every wise man's adoption in my narrative, it is the only opportunity I shall have of adding the quantum of stolen interest it affords my pages. So back to Perim.

I slept many a night under canvas on the sandy deserts of the mainland, from which we were divided by a narrow strait of two or three miles, and thought I was familiar with everything that creepeth upon the ground as a bedfellow, and could defy the wickedest will of the worst. My experiences had been inland. I had not lain on the "Red Sea shore." As soon as darkness fell o'er those silver sands all the imps from there to Erebus convened a pandemonium,

opening with a devil's tattoo on our tent; such a rattling and scratching overhead as, at first, could not by any possible conjecture be attributed to human agency. There were eight of us in the tent; one thought it was an earthquake, another thought it must be hailing, two or three agreed it must be spirits, and nobody seemed to care about investigating. The awful rattling on the canvas increased, and we all suddenly came to the conclusion that the men in the other tent were having a little joke with us, and were raining pebbles from the beach on to our canvas roof. We had just organized a sortie in force to punish their supposed disrespect, when they came in a body to the tent and called us out. The moment we heard their voices the row ceased, which confirmed us in our opinion that they were the cause of it. They, however, swore that it was that very noise of which we complained that brought them out; they had found out the cause of it to be hundreds of little crabs running over the tents, which sloped up from the sand without up and down walls. We took a

good deal of convincing, but found it to be a fact. Afterwards the men returned to their tent to make the best they could of it, for we could suggest nothing, indeed only half believing them. A few minutes after they had gone, and all was quiet, the rattling and scratching on the canvas broke out again. I took a light and rushed out. We found the ground all round and the top of the tent covered with crabs about the size of a man's fist, scurrying about in every direction. Nobody was prepared to stop up all night to hunt them off the canvas, so we made ourselves as comfortable as we could under the circumstances. But it was such a singular fiendish patter!

The local reporter on a provincial paper, in describing a skating accident, wrote: "The unfortunate youth gave a weird wild cry *seldom heard in these parts.*" Ours was an uncanny noise which I don't believe was ever heard in any parts before or since. One satisfaction we took out of our tormentors every now and then: when the canvas seemed thick with crabs we would strike it up from

underneath, and send a shower of crabs flying through the air, and hear them come rattling down on the shingle, no doubt cracking their shells and breaking a few superfluous limbs.

We soon tired of this fun, for five minutes after we had knocked them all off they would swarm back again, and the row would be as deafening as ever. I did drop off into a doze sometime after midnight, and was awakened by a tweak on the eyebrow. I put my hand up and grasped a crab, and paid for my temerity with a nipped finger from a brute that hung on like a bull-dog. He never let go; I wrung my hand till I wrung his nipping claw right off. Der Herr! The light had gone out, and I thought if he'd got me by the nose! but no need to speculate on possible calamities when the tent was full of crabs, and all hands hopping about among them in their bare feet. A hairy-worm in a St. George's in the East young ladies' dancing academy, I am told by one who has witnessed the effects, has induced an unexpected display of agility, the language being "the worst I've heard

since I came downstairs, from mouths as pretty as ever blew the head off a pot of four-half." But I think it must have been even more shocking to hear those seven men dancing about in the dark in their bare feet among the poor little crabs, and calling upon their gods. I was covered over with my blanket, and, excepting that the chief mate, who had no blanket and weighed fourteen stone, jumped on me a couple of times, mentioning in passing that he had a crab on each toe, I did not participate in the excitement, but let them get a light, and clear the crustaceans as best they could.

When day broke the cooks made coffee, and as the breeze was too fresh and sea too high to admit of our going off to the wreck, all hands were allowed to make up for their bad night's rest by sleeping through the day. If the sea increased there was a probability that the wreck would break up, in which case, from the position it was in, a good deal of wreckage might be washed upon the beach. The chief and I watched for this all day, but no signs of a break-up of the wreck appeared; the spars

and funnel were standing at nightfall. Three or four steamers passed, but none of them offered to take us off. This night was the same as the previous one. We never found a remedy for the crab nuisance. The next day and the next were the same; nothing to do for a week, and the old ship hanging together.

We might have gone off to the wreck, but the provisions had now been so long immersed that they would not be worth recovering; and to make matters in this connection worse, our provisions on shore were running short. We had nothing left but coffee, sugar, and flour, and it began to look as though we should after all have to fall back on the Sepoys' rice. On the eighth day the cooks made a great boilerful of a kind of hasty-pudding out of flour and sugar, and announced that there was nothing else to eat in the camp, but we could have as much of that as we liked. The sailors, as an attractive signal to passing ships, chalked on a tarpaulin in huge letters, readable at three miles with a good glass, "Wholesale and export pudding-

shop," and this they lashed to oars and stood up on the beach, but did not attract floating custom.

It was not until the ninth day that a vessel arrived to take us off the island. It was her Majesty's Indian Marine Ship *Witch*. This is the only one of the Indian Marine I have ever been on board of, and for the credit of that service, in which I have many friends, and which I know to possess many smart officers, I will abstain from detailing the laxity and slovenliness of this ship. I trust she is by no means an example of the whole service, for I have seldom seen a worse kept or dirtier ship inboard. There was paint enough about her, in all conscience. She was like a merryman's coat for colours, where you could penetrate the dirt to get at them. I have often run from Bab-el-Mandeb to Aden in thirteen hours, and yet we were two nights and three days steaming the distance against a moderate head breeze.

In Aden certain of the crew received notice that they would be retained to give evidence at the

inquiry into the loss of the ship. I was subjected to a certain amount of interrogation from the Marine Superintendent, and confined myself to simply answering his questions. I was below at the time the vessel struck, and had been for four hours previously. For some reason the captain was anxious that I should not appear at the inquiry, so, partly by my own affected ignorance and stupidity, and more through the captain's exertions and admissions exempting me from all blame, I obtained permission to leave with the rest of the crew not retained. The poor fellows had no money due, their advance in Calcutta not being worked up yet. I had a good pay day—over thirty pounds. With this and as much more, which I was able to negotiate in Aden, I determined to pay my passage home, let my absence from the inquiry cost what it might; for one of the most irritating and annoying processes a sailor can be subjected to is an inquiry into nautical affairs in which landsmen act as adjudicators. It is written, "Thou shalt not bear false witness *against* thy

neighbour"—the italics are ours. One of the dearest usages, and one of the most reprehensible, among merchant mates is an absolute obedience to the text and not the spirit of the commandment. Through thick and thin a member of a ship's after-guard will bear false witness *in favour* of his neighbour, loyally perjuring himself again and again. The evidence of an officer given in a court on shore against a man or in favour of his captain, is no more to be accepted than is the evidence of Policeman X against Prisoner A. B. I have had a large experience, and do not set down aught in malice; nay, I extenuate somewhat, and know well the extent and importance of the charge, challenging any sailor to refute my statements. The instances I could quote in evidence are legion. It is done with the greater impunity in that in nine cases out of ten the hearers of marine cases are incompetent to detect prevarication confused by technicalities; or when they do attempt to cross-question a witness, only provoke derision and amusement by their total lack of acquaintance

with the simplest, most obvious conditions of the case, inducing reckless disrespect for the majesty of the law. I could give examples enough to make a book of themselves. One I will introduce here. It is nothing more nor less than a fair sample, not in the least exaggerated, of what occurs in a nautical litigation.

I was in the Supreme Court, Demerara. A ship bound from the Cape of Good Hope to Boston had put in to Georgetown with mutiny on board. The crew were tried on the serious indictment of mutiny and violence on the high seas. The judge had on the first day made a note that the lower maintopsail-sheet had been carried away off the Cape. On the second day of the trial—it lasted three days, and the men were acquitted—the judge asked the pilot, who had boarded the ship outside the Demerara light-ship, if he had noticed that the topsail-sheet was carried away—the topsail-sheet that had been carried away off the Cape of Good Hope! Did his judgeship think they had come all the way from the Cape without repairing it; or did his judge-

ship not know anything about what he was talking of?

Had I been asked my private opinion, in confidence, as to how we lost our ship, I should have said it was through the grossest carelessness in navigation. The ship had overrun her dead-reckoning a little, which the captain, with a reckless confidence in the slowness of his ship, did not allow for. The chief, who was on watch, influenced also by the dead-reckoning, misjudged the distance of the almost dazzling light, and ran into it on a bearing which would have taken him clear enough had he been ten miles off it. During the last half-hour of his watch there had been furious firing-up in the engine-room, creating dense smoke from the funnel, which blew ahead in heavy wreaths, preventing his seeing the land as he would otherwise have done when so near.

As I mentioned before, I was unable to see the land through the smoke, even after the ship struck. However, had I been a witness on the inquiry, I honestly affirm that no such opinions

could have been extracted from me. True to myself and my captain, I should have done my utmost to mystify my examiners. I think, after all, that the captain and mate must have been pretty successful in that way without my assistance, for I heard that the poor compass took the greater part of the blame. The captain got off with his certificate suspended for six months, and the mate who was on watch at the time had his suspended for one year.

Nine steamers out of ten that go on shore do so in consequence of culpable carelessness, amounting almost to wilfulness. One of the narrowest escapes I ever had was owing to almost identical causes with the shipwreck I have described. I was in a sailing-ship, the *Atlantic King*, at the time, and we were bound from the Cape to Calcutta. We entered the Bay of Bengal at the first burst of the south-west monsoons, and were making a good run up the bay, the weather keeping finer and drier than we had expected. As in all small ships, relatively short-handed, I, the second mate, had

no time for independent navigation, often going a month without feeling interest enough to look in the chief's log-book to see what latitude and longitude we were in; while as for looking at the chart, I actually did not know of the existence anywhere in the world of an island called the South Sentinel—much less did I know that it lay about two hundred miles to the westward of the Andamans, and was directly in our course. But on this night I was to be made aware of its existence with a surprise. The only explanation I can conceive for the captain's not telling me to look out for land is that he thought the mate would be sure to do it; while the mate said nothing about it to me because he felt certain the captain, with whom I was on very good terms, must have done so. Through the day we had carried a fine breeze about seven knots, just enough out on the starboard quarter to allow of canting the yards a point in to port. The rain kept off until after eight p.m., when I went below, as did the captain, leaving no special night-orders, so far as I heard.

Both the captain and mate were men of whose abilities I hold a very high opinion, and their remissness appears to me inexplicable. One thing is to be said: when the captain went below, the ship was only going seven knots, and the wind had been steady all day, both in force and direction; nor were there any signs of the weather altering or wind increasing; and it was entirely owing to the latter event taking place that I found myself in the emergency I am coming to.

At midnight I was turned out to relieve the chief. It was raining torrents, and blowing fresh; there was no moon, and it literally was impossible to see a hand held before the face. I groped my way to the poop, found the mate, and said:

"Geewhillikins, it's dark!"

Now the mate had been standing three hours in the rain, peering into the pitchy darkness ahead, through which the ship was rushing at eleven knots an hour; so that between strained eyes, strained attention to canvas and steering, added to the fact

that he was wet through, he was not in the best of humours, which made him growl out:

"Perhaps you'd like the gas lit?"

All the causes which had combined to make the mate sulky acted on me in the same way prospectively; so I replied:

"Go to h—ll! Can't be civil to everybody."

No more passed between us; the mate went below, and left me on watch—of course understanding, from his not saying anything, that there had been no change in the course or orders since I had given up the deck at eight o'clock. We often relieved one another with a similar ceremony; it was all in good part between us.

I had a miserably trying watch. It blew hard, but the wind was steady, with no chance whatever of its shifting its quarter; so I saw no reason to shorten sail any. The worst feature was the pitchy blackness caused by the tropical rain and black masses of flying cloud overhead. I went round the deck a couple of times with the bull's-eye to see royal and topgallant gear clear, and any-

thing like the Cimmerian gloom around me, after using the bull's-eye, I have very seldom seen.

At a quarter to four I hove the log, and found the ship making eleven and a half knots. It was my usual custom, after heaving the log, to go along the port side to light the chief's lamp and enter the account on the log-slate. It was the lee side on this night, and the boy who was reeling up the line stuck himself right in the alley-way. I was on the point of slinging him aside to make way for myself to pass, when I thought, "Poor little buffer! he's wretched enough;" and besides, I was too wet and tired myself for unnecessary exertion; so I turned round, walked over to windward, and went along the weather side of the poop. As I came to the mizzen backstays the ship gave a gentle roll to port, and I leant over to starboard, allowing my head to go outside the rigging for a look ahead, as I had done habitually a hundred times that night; but it was by the sheer accident of the ship rolling conveniently that I did so at that moment.

The moon had just risen; there was a break in

the clouds ahead, and there, right across the bows, standing up bold and high against the bright bit of sky, stood huge precipitous rocks, the sea breaking against them, and pelting a hundred feet in foam and spray up the face of the cliff!

To me, who believed that we were not within three hundred miles of land, it was a facer. I kept my senses, though I know, had I spoken then, my voice would have sounded a horrified, tremulous treble. I said: "The Andaman Islands are to the eastward, the Bay of Bengal to the westward." I think we must have been careering on to certain destruction for fifteen or twenty seconds before I commanded myself sufficiently to give an order, and had formed my decision. I felt that, whatever I did, I must keep the men under control.

I turned to the man at the wheel, and said firmly and calmly:

"Hard a starboard!"

"Sir?" queried the man, probably thinking I was dreaming or out of my mind.

"Hard a starboard!" I said, a little louder, but

still not appearing excited, though the delay was agonizing.

"Sir?" said the astonished man.

This time I let out with a roar:

"Hard a starboard, d—n you!"

"Ay, ay, sir!" said the man, in a resigned, "obey-orders-break-owners" tone of voice, as he rattled the helm hard up.

To him it must have appeared downright madness to bring the ship to the wind blowing half a gale, and every stitch of canvas on her. As she answered her helm and came up to the wind, the man saw the rocks close alongside, gasped, and turned pale; had he seen the danger before he put the helm up he would never have been able to do it. I let her come up to the wind until the sails touched, and then righted the helm, steadying her on a course that just kept the sails full; the sails being so trimmed very fine, she did not lie over to any dangerous extent, but continued to fly through the water at right angles to the course which had been rushing her at the rocks.

I glanced over the starboard side; the cliff was not two ship's lengths off. In an instant more it hung over us; a huge spray rebounded from the face of the rock, and fell so near us that it made me start back from it. Then the horrible black iron face of the island glided past the stern, was across the wake; all was clear ahead and to leeward. The danger was past, but it had been an awful touch-and-go. I felt an elevation a man only feels after moments of such awful peril. I could have laughed out loud, or danced; but I took care to show no emotion. I went to the break of the poop, and there saw all hands forward were on deck, locking about as helpless as a crowd of frightened men can look.

I sung out to the boatswain: "Come up on the poop, and look after her. I'm going below a minute."

"Ay, ay, sir!" said the old boatswain cheerfully.

I then told him to keep her as she was going; and, remembering that it must be four o'clock by

this time, I told a boy to strike eight bells and call the chief. I suppose making eight bells let the men know the danger was over, for they all went forward, talking and laughing; and, I suppose, each telling his experience as carelessly as if they had never known what it was to be within half a minute of certain death.

I went below, and woke up the captain; he was very sound asleep, and I had to call him three times. As soon as he woke up he felt the ship lying over, and said:

"Wind shifted, Mr. Keane?"

"No, sir; altered the course. Land ahead!"

"Is it near?"

"It's been right aboard us."

"Yes? I'll be up in a minute."

I went on deck again, and found the old mate there. He wanted explanations, and so did I. He asked what had I been doing with the ship? and I asked him why he had not told me we were in with the land. Then the captain came up, and I pointed out the island astern. I could see the old

man was agitated; but he affected to make light of it before the man-at-the-wheel and boatswain.

He said, "You're all right, Mr. Keane; you can keep her on her course again."

I said, "Ay, ay, sir!" passed the word on to the chief, who took charge, and I went below.

I could not sleep. I was too thoroughly roused for that, so sat smoking in my cabin. In about ten minutes the captain came to my cabin, and heard the full, true, and particular account. He gave me great credit for having managed it with so little fuss; and did not blame my look-out in the least, as he might have done.

Next day I was surprised there was so little talk among the men; they never seemed to have really appreciated their danger. I took the "youth at the prow," who had been on the look-out, aside, and asked him casually how it was he had not reported the land until I altered the course. He told me he had seen it some time before, but, not expecting land, he had mistaken it for the spritsail-yard—a very possible delusion for a man half asleep,

walking a forecastle head, to be under. She was the only ship I ever was in that carried a spritsail-yard. Apropos of this curious mistake, I have, for the greater part of a watch, seen a ship broad on the bow, and then lost sight of her again in a most provoking manner, until at last I found that it was the "fore-topmast-studding-sail-boom-brace-block" that, with the roll of the ship, occasionally rose in my line of sight above the horizon.

One slander that arose in the ship, which I cannot help introducing, shows how a man can be wilfully traduced. I was standing near the fore-castle door; a man was talking so loudly that I could not help hearing what he said. "Yes, and when the second mate went down to call the old man he was standing behind the door with his oilskins on and a bag of rupees in his hand, ready for a jump." That, as the reader knows, was a lie; yet had a disaster come off, and that man been the only one saved, I have no doubt he would have sworn to the same or any other extravagant romance he might have concocted.

CHAPTER IV.

New Guinea Projects — A Passenger Ship — Female Amenities—Port Said—An Outing—Tigers Adrift.

DURING my short stay in Aden I came across home papers, and saw that New Guinea was attracting a great deal of public attention in England. From a very early age I had fancied that I saw in New Guinea the field for my life-work. In every act of my life hitherto I had been influenced solely by considerations as to its bearing on a future career of exploration in that quarter of the world. I had sacrificed prospects again and again, because they no way tended towards my object. I had performed the fearfully risky pilgrimage to Mecca with but one purpose; and that was, by performing a feat to bring my name forward as a capable traveller, it would stand me in good stead as recom-

mendation for the support and means I should require to advance my long-cherished designs on Papua. Now here was what I had come to regard as my "claim" being jumped.

I had dwelt so long, so ambitiously, and so earnestly on the matter, that I had come to feel a proprietary right in the whole island, neglected Dutch claim and all; for the Dutch had certainly not done the reasonable amount of work on their "claim" which should prohibit its being jumped by an honest "Injin." The day and the hour seemed to have come, and it looked very much as if the man had not.

It may be imagined with what feelings of apprehension I in Aden read that at length New Guinea was to the fore in Europe, and Germany was seriously directing its new broom of annexation and colonizing enterprise towards it. I saw what I at that time believed to be my proper and only sphere of usefulness in life vanishing, and myself falling back into the great majority of failures. Even now I do not look

back on my vaulting ambition of a year or two ago without a certain feeling of regret for the day-dreams of fame and adventure that cost me a trifle of the best ten years of my life. I am even conscious of a feeling of resentment against a world that failed to recognise my suitability for the work, which the reader will no doubt be justified in scoffing at. The retrospect amuses me now. At that time, in a fever of anticipation and excitement, I hastened to London, determined to move heaven and earth to help me to set out early from that base of operations, with New Guinea for my object.

About the time I was ready to leave Aden the steamship *Skyoogle* came in to coal. I am obliged to conceal her real name under a *nom-de-plume*, on account of the lady and gentlemen passengers whose doings in my veracious narrative I propose to dwell upon for a time. The captain of the *Skyoogle* was an old shipmate of mine, who very kindly offered to let me work my passage home as a supernumerary officer; but I preferred, as she

was carrying passengers, to take my passage in the usual form, paying for it at the office. She, like the *Deucaledon*, was from Calcutta; was a ditcher, but a much finer ship than the one I had lost; owned by an old-established firm. On going on board, I found that there were only fifteen first-class passengers, and that they had grown quite as well acquainted with one another's affairs as people usually do in twenty days at sea. They were as intimate with one another at mess or on deck as the members of a gathering of friends in a country house. But even among so few the inevitable quarter-deck cliques were set up. These afford such a study of narrowness to a liberal, go-as-you-please, cosmopolitan, all-things-to-all-men philosopher such as I fancy myself. There were five ladies, young and pretty. The only two husbands attached were a captain and a globe-trotter. The other three ladies were the wife of a Hooghly pilot, an uncovenanted civil servant, and the wife of a big railway swell. On sitting down to table on the first night, as we were steaming

out of Aden, I found myself placed between Mrs. Major and our doctor passenger, near the captain's end of the table. Outside the harbour there was a pretty stiff breeze and some swell on. When the table had been laid, and until we were well seated, we had been in smooth water, under the land, and the fiddles had not been put on; but as the ship drew out to sea she felt the swell, and began to roll a little. Things promised to be lively shortly, if the rolling increased; bottles looked insecure on their bases, and plates began to slide a little. I was expecting it, when the ship gave a heavy roll, and I just seized my plate and glass, one in each hand, in time to save them. The Indian medico on my right saved his plate; he was an old traveller, and knew that his seat was secure, though the angle of it was enough to make a landsman accustomed to movable chairs fancy he must pitch headfirst backwards. All along the table crockery and glass fetched way, emptying their contents into their owners' laps. But the lady on my left, who had been in

the act of pouring sauce out of a bottle, feeling herself going back, back, back, abandoned her trencher, threw out her arms to save herself, and clutched at my shirt-front with the hand that held the Worcester sauce bottle, neck down. I couldn't expostulate, and I couldn't let go my own dinner to remove the hand, so for the space of three rolls that bottle was held hysterically against my bosom, until the last drop had run out. There was a collecting of senses and gathering together of fragments that remained. My fair neighbour recovered herself, and removed the now empty bottle, apologizing profusely in the utmost confusion, while I protested that it was of no consequence whatever, quite unavoidable, an everyday occurrence; it had often happened to me before, and I always liked it. All this with the horrible liquid trickling down me, inside my shirt. I believe I earned that lady's undying gratitude by the saint-like fortitude with which I bore the infliction. The ice was broken, at all events, on the first night, and I made the acquaint-

ance of new friends, whom I shall always regret having had to part with so soon, probably never to meet again. I spent much of my time in the officers' cabins during my passage, but never failed to be at the afternoon tea presided over by the lady planter. It was a private set-out, the tea grown and provided by our entertainer; quite a daily quarter-deck picnic, confined to a clique certainly, for the invitations extended only to the ship's officers and myself as outsiders. The party consisted of Mr. Jennings, the planter, and his wife; the globe-trotter, Mr. Willoughby, and his wife; Doctor B——, a famous Indian sportsman, and Freddy. Freddy was a decent, gentle young creature, who had been spun at Cooper's Hill, and had gone out to his father, a well-known Indian general, to try and drop into something—tea or coffee. He had not dropped into anything good enough, so was returning to England. His functions were to fetch and carry for the ladies of the clique, who spared him not, and to one of whom he was closely related. "Freddy, bring me

a glass of water, and—eh—and put a little drop out of the bottle on my husband's what-not in it." "Freddy, bring me a peg, and tell Robert to mix it stiff." Such expressions were certainly heard late one evening on the quarter-deck; but perish the thought!

An announcement posted in the smoking-room puzzled me a good deal at first: "The Babe of Contention. A disunited service farce. In consequence of its great success, Mr. L. begs to remind the public that admission to reserved seats on a bunk will only be sold for two pegs. Tickets for standing room, as heretofore, one peg. Office open all day. Seats may be booked in advance. Orders promptly executed. Performance to commence at 9.30. The audience are cautioned that any attempt to applaud or audibly express approval or the reverse, renders them liable to be chucked out. No fees."

When the meaning of the notice came out, I found that two of our lady passengers, an Indian army captain's wife with a little boy of four, and a

Hooghly pilot's wife, had been paired off into the same cabin, and these two spent an hour or two every night before they went to sleep in a civil wrangle, and the man whose cabin was next to theirs used to invite a number of men into his cabin each evening to hear the heated discussion between the two dames. The matron of the land service hinted, as delicately as ladies only can hint, that the pilot service (a part of Her Majesty's Indian Marine) was a very inferior branch, standing on her dignity, and insinuating her right of precedent. The naval grass widow found the child to be her opponent's vulnerable point, and made it out to be everything it should not; both of them unconsciously affording a nightly fund of amusement to a crowd of men in the next cabin.

The pilot's wife scored very heavily one day. Her enemy constantly boasted that her little boy was exempt from all the undesirable accomplishments English children invariably pick up from the native servants. It came about in this way.

On coming up from tiffin side by side with the marine lady, as we emerged from the cabin we came upon the young gentleman in short frocks, stamping on the deck, and giving vent to as blood-curdling a flow of obscene Hindostani vituperation as I ever heard come out of the mouth of a bazaar-hag. A native punkah boy, who had refused to allow the little blackguard to pull the punkah-rope, had incensed him. Both myself and the lady with me understood the language, and so awful was it that we glided round opposite sides of the quarter-deck house. I am not easily shocked, but I confess I felt a shyness about meeting a lady again in whose presence I had heard such awful conversation. However, we were not the only ones who heard it, for the mother and others came up in time to catch a pretty good flow of it. After that the child was never allowed out of its mother's sight—generally tied to the leg of her chair with a couple of fathoms of rope. It was very odd to see the mother sitting in the chair reading a book, and, without taking her eyes off the page, round in on

the line until the boy was close up to her, and then give him rope again. At the risk of our appearing a shady lot, I must relate how the military lady scored.

One night, after "lights out," I found all the gentlemen of our set in conclave on the quarter-deck, over a basket of soda-water and a bottle of Hennessy. The spirit of mischief came strong on me at the moment. I was perfectly aware that Mrs. Willoughby greatly disapproved of Mr. Willoughby's indulging in cups without the tempering influence of her presence, and I will do her the justice to say that she kept him pretty well under control—not in a strong-minded way, for I have seldom seen a better assorted or more affectionate pair, though Willoughby did always refer to his wife as "the manager." Seeing him at this late hour applying himself to what I knew to be in his domestic relations unlawful drinks, I said, as I came up:

"I say, Willoughby, the manager is looking all round the ship for you."

"Is she, by George? What shall I do with the bottle?"

Here another man suggested:

"Lower it down the ventilator into your cabin."

Capital idea, everyone agreed. A bit of small line was instantly cut off the awnings, and the bottle lowered gently down *the wrong ventilator.* I knew more of the construction of the ship, and saw the bottle would descend into the cabin of the contentious ladies, but let it go without saying anything.

Willoughby then hurried down to his cabin. Exactly what happened there has never transpired. Certain it is that he found the manager in bed—probably not asleep, for he did not appear on deck again that night; also it is certain he did not find the bottle of Hennessy he thought he had sent down. Where that went we might only gather from a story that the army lady sent on its rounds, after hearing which, those who were not in the secret must have thought the marine lady greatly maligned if it was not true that she had had a bottle of brandy lowered down the ventilator to her in bed every night since she came on board.

We had the famous Indian shikari in our very select clique, who, like myself, had written a book. He was taking home three young tigers. It was said, not by himself, that he had once shot a man down for shooting badly. It was at an English country house, and he had gone out with a man he had never met before, but who he soon found knew just enough about a gun to shoot a dog and a gamekeeper in the first half-hour. Our friend saw this happen at some distance on the opposite side of a low coppice, and also saw the way the man handled his gun. He thereupon swore, "If that man comes within gunshot of me, I'll shoot him. I must; it's just my life or his." And sure enough the man did come within gunshot, and immediately received the bulk of a charge of number six in his legs. I think it is a great pity a few more examples of the same kind are not made.

Our shikari passenger told a rather good joke of one of the great Indian authorities on wild sports. Old Indians will, of course, know to whom the story alludes when I tell them he is the man who, out

pig-sticking, unhorsed in some way and disarmed, calmly sat down with his knees tucked up to his chin, folded his arms across his abdomen to protect his most vital parts, and, unmoved, allowed the boar to slash and gash him in all directions for some minutes before aid arrived. But to the story: the same gentleman was out after bear with another sportsman. They were posted at some distance from one another while the cover was being beaten. After he had waited a very long time, and no game had appeared, he was on the point of giving it up, when he saw a dark object moving towards him out of the jungle. He was rather short-sighted, and had left his glasses at home, but that did not, as a rule, affect his shooting. He aimed at the object, and fired. A hit, a very palpable hit, for the creature jumped about in the jungle, roared, and behaved in the wildest manner, while it was undoubtedly charging right on him. Losing no time, he again put up his rifle, took a long careful aim at the creature, which really behaved in an extraordinary way, and fired. When the smoke cleared away, he

saw, not a bear, but his friend, pale and breathless, standing before him, fortunately unhurt. The other man had given up hopes of sport before the short-sighted man, and left his post to cross the jungle to rejoin his fellow-sportsman, little suspecting the danger he would run in emerging from the jungle.

Really the tales one hears on board a passenger ship are endless; they serve their purpose of whiling the time at sea, but one cannot reproduce all one hears and sees there, short as the time is. So jolly were we in the *Skyoogle*, that to me we scarcely seemed to have left Aden before we were in the Suez Canal. All went well until an hour or two before we reached Port Said, and then something happened that made me begin to think I must be like the boy whose name I have forgotten, who was only in three ships, all of which were lost: he was one of the survivors of the *Cospatrick*. We were all down at tiffin at the time, when we felt a very considerable bump that made the glasses shake on the table. Nobody was a bit alarmed, or rose from the table. I remarked, "She's touched

the bank." When we went on deck I saw something unusual going on forward, and recognised at once that the ship was more down by the head than she had been a few minutes before. I went forward and asked the chief what had happened. He said, "We touched that dredger we just passed, and stove a plate." The fore compartment filled, but it did not put her so much by the head that she would not steer. After we reached Port Said the damage turned out to be much more serious than had at first been anticipated. It became certain that we should be detained at least a week to repair it. The reader will meet with enough seamanship in these pages, so I will not stop to describe the extent of the injury the ship received, nor the manner in which it was repaired, though both might be interesting to sailors. Furthermore, I spent the week ashore, so will ask you to follow me. Port Said has come in for fully its share of unpopularity during the last few years, and I know little good of it. From a distance it has the appearance of a sandy ridge just above high-water-

mark, with an enormous lighthouse erected on it. On a nearer approach a cluster of cardboard houses, occupying about twice the space of Trafalgar Square, make themselves evident, but still only appendant to the great light-tower. I have passed through Port Said a good many times—between twenty and thirty—and have often taken a run on shore. The place supplies studies of the inner life of Syria, Egypt, Italy, Greece, France, Spain, and all the other fandango-dancing nationalities, the scum and offscourings of which seem to have concentrated themselves on that little peninsula.

The most pathognomonic feature of Port Said is that it keeps meridional time. Theoretically, I suppose, they have a night and day, but not so practically. Midnight is only the twelfth hour of the day, and things are even more lively then than they are at noon, the twenty-fourth hour of the day. No matter what time I have gone ashore and I think I have done so at nearly every hour of the twenty-four, I have always found bars open and the inhabitants all apparently wide awake and

on the move. A few of the more respectable shops in the principal thoroughfares do close at eleven p.m. and open at five a.m., but the great majority are always open. Dust is also a very salient characteristic of Port Said, not so much the indigenous product as the imported variety. To say there is coal-dust in the air at the moorings, is to utter an inane and superfluous remark that may always be taken as said. When your own ship is coaling and some dozen or so other ships are either discharging or taking in coal, the hot dry air becomes loaded with coal-dust in a way that makes it difficult and distressing to breathe at times, covering everything with a thick layer of grimy "matter out of place," and making sweeps or Ethiopian serenaders of the fairest. The roads of Port Said were never made; they are merely rights of way acquired by use and custom. Villainous as the place is, the town is not ostentatiously profligate, though nearly every second house is a bar. Drunkenness is very rare, seeming to be confined to visitors coming on shore from the ships. I once saw a very noisy English

party on shore; they hired a whole *café chantant* for the night, and behaved very badly indeed. The immorality of Port Said is rather under the surface, but not far. A character sketch has come down to us from one who knew the East of the period: "Her feet abide not in her house"—a condition of things at this day happily confined to one country, in which land, I need not say, "chaste Dian's silver livery" itself would need a champion after five in the evening. More than a thousand years ago one Mohammed issued his mandate, and once for all wiped that stain off the East.

One street of Port Said there is in which it may safely be said, "So bald es nacht geworden ist, sind alle katten grau." At the entrance of this street is placed a large red lamp—a danger-signal —which serves its purpose I apprehend.

Boat-sailing outside the breakwater I have sometimes enjoyed, but one can't be always sailing aimlessly about. Our shikari passenger and I took our guns out the first morning, but it was the wrong time

of the year, though good wild-fowl-shooting is to be had on Lake Menzaleh in the winter. Turtle swim about the south breakwater, and in the afternoon I went out with our little party to try and swim one. It is easy enough to swim a fifty-pound turtle from the bottom in clear water, where one can see. I have often done it at the Seychelles, but at Port Said the water is very muddy. I walked along the breakwater watching for a chance. At last a turtle of manageable size put his head up to blow an instant, and sank. I could not see an inch below the surface, but thought I had his direction. I took a header after him, and came right down on him. I grabbed him in the proper manner, as I thought—right hand under rim of shell over tail, and left hand on edge of shell above the neck, holding him well under me. I was just gathering to throw his head upwards, when I felt something rub across my thigh that felt very like his head. In which case I had hold of him wrong end first—a fearful mistake, for a turtle has a beak like a pair of shears, that will slice a broomstick across.

I gave the turtle a horrified shove off that sent me flying to the surface, and did not again attempt to swim a Port Said turtle in muddy water.

That night at dinner the captain said, "Why don't some of you take a run up to Cairo, and see the Pyramids?"

This I thought an excellent idea, and was not alone; for all our party except Mrs. Jennings and Freddy, who had visited them on their way out, took to the notion at once. I think the captain must have been visited by one of Cook's agents who had heard we were to be detained for a week, for he urged the advantages of Cook's specially arranged trips quite as an advocate.

We at first hesitated to be "personally conducted;" but on second thoughts I, who had been conducting all over the world all my life, decided that it would be very pleasant to be conducted just for once, and set to to advocate for Cook. I found I possessed just the influence to determine the rest. I flatter myself I know how to make my way about in the East, if any man does;

but I often on this trip congratulated myself on having patronised Mr. Cook.

We were saved in time and money considerably, and of trouble and worry we were spared an incalculable amount. Our party, as I have said before, only numbered eight. Mrs. Jennings and Freddy remained behind, so that we were only six with energy enough to do the Pyramids—Mr. and Mrs. Willoughby, Mr. Jennings, the shikari, the Indian medico, and myself.

We dauntless six started on Monday at midnight, by the postal launch, for Ismalia. These launches are high-pressure puffers, and make row enough to be going a hundred and two, but are really making a poor seven.

As morning broke we saw a jackal sauntering along the bank, keeping pace with us. It was evidently going as slowly as it could to allow us to pass; but seeing we would not get on out of the way, it stretched itself into a canter, and was a mile ahead before we did a couple of hundred yards. The launch was supposed to carry twenty-

two persons; it had a first and second class saloon. It would not have been difficult to knock the captain from the after-end of the first-class saloon into the fore-end of the second class. The first-class saloon would have held the six of us comfortably enough; but when we came on board, we found a Nubian gentleman ensconced there. I should not have minded, for my part, if the Mahdi himself had been there; but my Anglo-Indian friends actually put up with the smoky unsheltered deck rather than even enter the same saloon with "a nigger." I have seen a good deal of this in Indian railway carriages; but I don't think I ever saw people suffer quite so much inconvenience through pride of race as we did, for I could not make myself distinct from my party. The best camp-out I could make was on the top of a large canvas-covered object, from which, at intervals during the early morning, came smothered growls. When daylight appeared, which it did by the time we arrived at Kantara, I found I had been trying to sleep over a black panther of savage mien and disposition, that might

as easily as not have put its claws between the bars and drawn pictures on my flesh. At Kantara we went on shore. An open bar tempted the shikari, the doctor and me in; we honestly required a restorative. We called for our stimulant, and got it, and tossed it down simultaneously.

"I'm shot!" I cried, and fell forward on the bar.

A few moments of suspense and anguish; life seemed ebbing fast. I raised my eyes. The others were sitting on a bench, with heads bowed and tears trickling from their eyes. The doctor was mumbling something about "nitric acid" and his "poor mother." Then he sprang up, looked wildly round, and yelled, "Heavens! sudden death *in a place like this!*"

"No, not *sudden* death; if we hurry up we may reach the corner," I groaned out.

We did reach the corner, and yet survive; but never again on the banks of the Suez Canal!

We reached Ismalia about seven a.m., and adjourned to the Paris Hotel for a "meat break-

fast," as per "Itinerary." After breakfast a game of billiards, as the train did not leave until twelve o'clock.

It is very pleasant to be personally conducted, and have nothing to engage one's mind during delays but considerations of how best to do nothing. The billiards were too much for us:

> "A cloth untrue,
> A twisted cue,
> And elliptical billiard-balls."

Sir William Thomson, given the length, thickness, and weight of a rope, and the height it is dropped from, will tell you the form its coils will take on falling. It would require as abstruse a calculation to determine in what direction a ball would travel after having been struck by a cue on the Paris Hotel table. It was an arduous undertaking for which we had no liking; so we smoked and taught Mrs. Willoughby how not to play billiards until the train-time. Train at twelve o'clock; first-class carriage equals bad third at home. As a protection from the heat

overhead a canvas is stretched across as a ceiling about a foot under the roof. This was perforated with bayonet-holes, evidently reminiscences of the late war. We passed through Kassasin and Tel-el-Kebir, at which latter place we saw the remains of Arabi's works—wonderful defences; nothing but a night attack could have been successful with the forces employed against them. We have little to be proud of in our operations in Egypt, no matter how brilliant the generalship may have been.

In this narrative I will not invite discussion on such matters, but confine myself to description. There is a pretty bit of green at the little English cemetery at Tel-el-Kebir. From Zagazig, though the country has become fertile, dust and sand comes into the carriages nearly as copiously as in the desert.

We reached Cairo about five o'clock, and felt little inclined for anything more than a lounge and smoke before and after dinner; then early to bed, for we must be on our way to the Pyramids by six o'clock next morning.

On entering Shepheard's Hotel I heard a voice say, "Hullo, Keane! what brings you here?"

I looked up, and saw a face I seemed to know well, but could not put a name to.

We talked for some time; the stranger evidently knew all about me. He volunteered information about friends of mine who had been in Cairo, and just left.

After about ten minutes' conversation we parted, and to this day I don't know whom I was talking to. I regret that I did not ask him his name; but I remembered his face so well that I expected to recall his name every moment. My intense curiosity to know whom I was talking to has overcome my shyness, and induced me to mention the incident here in the hope that it will meet his eye. Should it do so, I beg he will communicate with the author, and set his much-exercised mind at rest.

Up early next morning, in order to reach the Pyramids before the day becomes too hot. It is not now the old business of donkeys, and a ferry

over the Nile. We get into our carriages at Shepheard's and drive through the town, and cross the Nile on the English-built bridge; through the village of Ghizeh; thence along an avenue of trees to the foot of the elevation on which the Pyramids are built. A rather severe climb up this, and we draw up in the shade of the sheikh's house, and at the foot of the Pyramid of Cheops. How blessed it is to be a Cook's tourist! Our "personal conductor" settles everything for us; and in a few minutes I find myself handed over to two thin, wiry sons of Ham, whom I should judge to be about two hundred and forty years old, but with strength and energy enough for twenty-four. I have seldom seen men so astonished as those guides were when I told them in Arabic that "I was born tired, and have been tired ever since;" but it did not prevent them lying all the same. One of them said that his father was the man whom Mark Twain had endeavoured to lure to his death.

We made the ascent up the north-east angle of

the Great Pyramid; the climb is not difficult, but horribly laborious. A conscientiously lazy man like myself can do it without any great exertion on his own part; for two guides get on the top of the step before you, and, one holding each arm, drag you up, while a third raises you from behind. Mrs. Willoughby took everything so pluckily that she was a great acquisition to us. She never complained that the sun was hot, or the dust a constant quantity; so we could only swear every inconvenience a pleasure, and affect to be enjoying ourselves immensely, as, to tell truth, we were. Our fair companion, though light-hearted enough, was not very strong, and her husband had thought it would perhaps not be advisable for them to ascend the Great Pyramid; but she insisted on following us, and went through the whole business, not feeling the violent exercise a bit more than her husband.

Jennings gave himself away at the top of the Pyramid. He whispered to me—I had seen a dangerous light in his eye for some time:

"There was a young lady called Etta,
Who said, if her husband would let her,
To the tomb of Cheops
She would go in two hops,
Which she did, and felt very much better."

The steps at first are very high, about four feet; but farther up they become smaller, and more "grateful and comforting." As we toil up a youthful acolyte passes nimbly from one to another, offering bad water. One of us, the shikari, nearly suffered from an old trick. The Arab, whilst holding your hand in climbing, if you should happen to be wearing a ring, gently manipulates it off your finger, and probably passes it to the acolyte, who may pass it away anywhere. The shikari was too many guns for the sheikh: he felt his ring slip over the first joint, closed on it, and put it in his pocket. The top of the Pyramid of Cheops has gone, somehow. I cannot accept as satisfactory the explanation of a certain reverend and learned gentleman, that it was washed away by the Noachian deluge. In whatever manner, the pointed apex, similar to that on the Pyramid of Cephron close at

hand, has disappeared, leaving an irregular platform 450 feet from the ground.

> "Rather make
> My country's high pyramids my gibbet,
> And hang me up in chains!"

cries Cleopatra. Me miserable! What a tremendous thought of horror!

The full sweep of the wind on the summit must sometimes be very destructive, and might in storms be credited with almost any power. This very year of my visit two Englishmen attempted to go up without a guide. They reached a point more than half-way up, when a squall of wind loosened the hold of one of them, and hurled him headlong to the bottom of the Pyramid, between 200 and 300 feet of a fall. Of course he was killed on the spot.

Arrived at the summit, we find a shady place, sit down, the guide shampoos us, and we soon begin to feel very comfortable, and at peace with all men. This is all the servile thief of an Arab is waiting for; as soon as he sees the expression of repose and contentment settled on your face, out comes

his bag of antiquities, which "he himself dug out of Pharaoh's tomb." To stay his intolerable importuning, I bought two coins. I chose them on account of its being totally impossible to discover any distinguishing mark on them, so that I could propagate the Arab's account of their origin with impunity. I was hesitating between the times of Joseph and M. de Lesseps, when that Jennings made an ass of himself again:

"When J. F. Keane came to Cairo,
The Arab remarked, 'Here's a tyro;'
So he made him the sale
Of a head of a nail,
And called it a coin—the liar, oh!"

Under these circumstances I concluded to keep my coins until I met a qualified numismatist. The great business of the show is the running down Cheops and up Cephron, and back again in a given time, for a certain sum of money. The Arab did it in the given time, which looked good work; but when he offered to do it in half the time, we suspected the disingenuousness of the offer—it looked very much as if "Schnidervelt doled dem cards."

We declined to invest after having a job like the first put upon us. The descent is easier work than coming up, but by no means as easy as it looks. About fifteen steps from the bottom we turn to our left, and traversing a pile of rubble formed of the ruined casing, we find the entrance to the chambers within. On the sides surrounding the entrance are many names in Greek and Roman characters. But do not be deceived; the ANTONY whose name you see carved there is not the Roman general who played such a delightful little game of fast and loose in these parts, according to Shakespeare, neither is it the Christian saint of Egypt. Examine further, and you will find it is "ANTONY Stubbs," who did not appear to have time to finish it in accordance with his first design, or he might have added, *more* his kind, "de Londres." Neither is the Διονυσιος Περγαμις, whose hand and superscription is also here, a follower of Alexander the Great; he is much more likely to have been a Suez photographer. The entrance passage is low and steep; it is most convenient to go down backwards, the

guides preceding with candles. After descending for some distance this passage is met by another, by which you ascend towards the centre of the Pyramid. After going along it for 103 feet you come to a platform from which a horizontal passage branches off to the Queen's Chamber. Here, also, in the mouth of the well is a perpendicular hole which goes down to the bottom of the Pyramid. The ascending path continues in the same direction, but is much enlarged, and now goes by the name of the Grand Gallery. After 103 feet of this you get on the flat again, and soon find yourself in the King's Ante-chamber; thence you proceed by a short and cramped passage into the King's Chamber itself. There you find yourself in an irregularly built room—I am nothing if not accurate—of 103 feet long, 103 feet broad, and 103 feet high,* containing a granite coffer supposed to be the sarcophagus of King Cheops. This is all seen by the light of magnesium wire with which the Arabs are

* Profound interest will be aroused by a uniformity in parts, confirming dependent dimensions, clearly indicating symbolic design never before hit upon, if such exist.

provided. The whole of the interior of the Pyramid is more than comfortably warm, 103° in the shade; though there was with us, I am happy to say, none of the abnormal-temperature-elevating force of which Professor Piazzi Smyth speaks, when he found the temperature 75·7° Fahr. "And no wonder," he says; "at least to anyone who should have looked in upon some of those mad and multitudinous scenes of lurid lighted revelry indulged in by many smoking tobacco-stinking gentlemen, a few ladies and imp-like Arabs of every degree, black, brown, and gray." We found the work much too hard to admit of smoking, and the place too warm to indulge in superfluous pranks or to remain longer than we could help. We get out as soon as we have done what is required of us, and find the sheikh waiting for us with edible coffee. Then boot and saddle. Our flying column is back at Shepheard's in time for burrah hazari, and the tallest, iciest drink we can secure. As I sat in a long chair peacefully smoking after breakfast, I thought I should like to go once more to the Pyramids with

a large party, a very large party, and sit in the carriage at the bottom, and watch them getting dragged up, and see them drink brackish water, and come bedraggled and perspiring back, as a friend of mine once had the wisdom to do, and is respected for doing. We proposed to spend a couple more days in Cairo; but a telegram came from the ship recalling us, as the repairs were nearly done, so we had to hurry back as we came.

Our return to the ship after the break in our voyage was a great relief, notwithstanding the little personal thought or inconvenience we had been put to during the trip. We were enjoying a yachting cruise, and the ship had come to be our home: when on board, we felt, "Now we're landed," as the duck said to the fox when she led her brood into the pond.

Our friend the shikari was the only one of our party who had any cause to regret the outing. During his absence the sailor who had undertaken the charge of his young tigers had allowed one of them to escape from the cage. The brute had

taken sole charge of the deck for half an hour, until the captain shot it. The captain could not be blamed, though there had probably been no necessity for killing the cub, which appeared to have created an absurd panic, it being, in all likelihood, as harmless as a kitten.

I remember seeing in a British India steamer, the *Arcot*, in which I was, three young tigers, larger than Newfoundland dogs, adrift on a deck crowded with several hundred Mecca pilgrims, and all were returned to their cage without any accident or fuss. The cage in which they were confined stood on the after-hatch fore and aft. It was a large cage, barred on each side with a partition running along its middle, in which was a drop-door. The man who had charge of the tigers would drive them over to one side of the cage, close the partition, and clean out the other side at his leisure; then, barring up the clean side, he used to open the partition, go round the cage, and drive the tigers back while he went through the same performance on the other side. One morning he neglected to

put the bars up on the side he had done with, went round the cage, drove the tigers through the partition, and clean out of the opposite side of the open cage. It might have been attended with very serious consequences; but to me, who saw the thing too late to interpose, it looked supremely absurd.

The tigers, on obtaining their liberty for the first time in their lives, took different directions, and, crouching in the nearest corners, lay snarling and exposing their teeth, showing unmistakable signs of nothing but fear—a most dangerous fear.

The pilgrims about behaved exceedingly well. There was little confusion. The side of the deck was simply deserted, and the crowd gazed in interest from all points of vantage at a respectful distance. I suppose the numbers were so great as to give a sense of safety, nobody believing that the tigers would select him when there were hundreds to choose from.

Mr. Fleuse, the third officer, myself, and the keeper, placed ourselves before a tiger each, barring

their exit from the corners they had taken up, should they attempt to move away. The captain and chief came on the scene, and a short discussion followed. Fleuse inquired had the tigers been fed that day? They had not; they had always been fed on living fowls. Fleuse called for three chickens from the hen-coop. Taking these, he threw one in the face of each tiger. The chickens seemed simply motionless, glued to the spot, so instantaneous was the fixing of teeth and claws. Fleuse then went deliberately up to a tiger, coolly took the loose skin of the back of the neck with one hand, and the root of the tail with the other, and, putting out his full strength, dragged the heavy brute along the deck to the cage, and by main strength forced it through the open bars.

The chicken diversion acted perfectly. The brute had no other object but to retain its prey. It growled fearfully; its eyes blazed; its teeth crushed through the chicken; its unsheathed claws clasped and pierced the quivering body. Red-hot irons

would hardly have made it loosen its grip of the bird.

The chief and I helped Fleuse to carry the other two tigers into the cage. I regret much that I have lost sight of my friend of late years. His name promised at one time to come very prominently before the world. I had been shipmate with him on more than one voyage. He was a born practical scientist. With no better opportunities than a sailor's life affords, he had brought out and patented a great number of ingenious inventions, among others the Fleuse diving apparatus and submarine lamp, which drew a vast amount of attention from scientific men. But my impression is that he lacked the immediate pecuniary resources to secure and work his inventions properly; the best of them were pirated from him most infamously.

The last time I saw him we dined together. He told me he had just finished an engagement at the Westminster Aquarium as the "Man Fish," appearing to feel keenly the necessity which forced

him thus to prostitute science in the hope of advancing his truly wonderful discoveries. Saying which, remember, I merely express my opinion, for which I am entirely responsible, in no way committing Mr. Fleuse, whose friendship I would value as formerly, should we ever be thrown together again.

This tiger digression must close my voyage in the *Skyoogle*. Nothing of special interest occurred during the remainder of the passage. It was one of my pleasantest voyages; I do not regret having paid my passage; it gave me so much greater liberty in my intercourse with the delightful society I met on board.

CHAPTER V.

New Guinea Project Abandoned—An Ice Voyage—In London Looking for Work Ashore—Hard-up—A Hard Case—Work as a Dock Labourer.

On reaching London I put up at the Family Hotel in the Strand which I always used when in "shingle ballast," which means when my powers of settling with my landlord were assured. The first thing I did was to draw up a sort of prospectus of my plans, to circulate among my personal friends to whom I looked for support. It ran somewhat in this manner:

"Forty years ago J. Bate Jukes, in his narrative of the surveying voyage of H.M.S. *Fly* in Torres Straits, wrote as follows: 'I know of no part of the world the exploration of which is so flattering to the imagination, so likely to be fruitful in interesting results to the naturalist and ethnologist

or the geographer, and altogether so well calculated to gratify the enlightened curiosity of an adventurous explorer, as the interior of New Guinea. New Guinea! The very mention of being taken into the interior of New Guinea sounds like being allowed to visit some of the enchanted regions of the "Arabian Nights," so dim an atmosphere of obscurity rests *at present* on the wonders it conceals.'

"So wrote an explorer forty years ago. To-day I can only add (following up the same figure) that its twin protecting genii, those grim spectres Starvation and Miasma, have encountered and repelled every subsequent endeavour to pass into those 'enchanted regions.'

"Lewis Carrol must have had one of the many expeditions to New Guinea in his eye when he wrote that delicious foolery, 'The Hunting of the Snark.' To our shame be it said, the map of *British* New Guinea remains like the Bellman's, 'A map we can all understand, a perfect and absolute blank.' It is now my intention to proceed

as soon as possible to British New Guinea, there to reside in the interior among the natives for many months, to learn the character and acquire the language of the natives, study the conformation and resources of the country, making at the same time such barometrical, magnetic, and astronomical observations as my few portable instruments will allow me. I anticipate making many indelible lines on the hitherto blank map of New Guinea."

On my return from the Hejaz, many of my experiences were so remarkable, notably my meeting with an English lady taken prisoner during the Indian Mutiny, that I was met everywhere by considerable incredulity, and in some high quarters by positive disbelief. In the cause of the lady prisoner I submitted to many most severe cross-questionings. I was sat upon by the "Indian Mutiny Relief Fund Committee," listened to imputations on the want of common-sense in those who believed my story from official bunglers in all the security of their red-tape, until at last, becoming callous to

aspersions on my own veracity, I published a circumstantial account of my journey to Mecca and Medina, which, though provoking a great deal of controversy, has never been disproved in a single statement. Though I had not the advantage of a gorilla to put in the witness-box like M. de Chaillu, yet the existence of the English lady under the circumstances described by me was corroborated by consular inquiry; and on March 25, 1882, the *Graphic* published a full-sheet engraving of the Kaaba from a photo taken by a Mohammedan (the first representation of the Mecca mosque or harem ever seen in Europe), and quoted in description of it, with acknowledgment, the very words written by me three years before.

The report of the accomplishment of undertakings, however, such as these will always require much confirmation; but I have thought that by previously making public the purpose, the method to be pursued, and the object of my expedition, it will on my return be known that I at least held the intention beforehand.

A short *résumé* of the known facts which bear on or can influence my project may not be out of place here. The works of two naturalists, D'Albertis and Wallace, comprised all that was known of New Guinea, and their observations were conducted for the most part in the Dutch or western peninsula of the island. But D'Albertis made a trip up the Fly river to the foot of the Victor Emanuel range of mountains—so named by him—thus entering the country from the south about the centre of the now British dependency. He observed that the farther he proceeded into the interior the people were more advanced towards civilization. Though he had extremely little intercourse with the natives, and that of a hostile character, and though, in the true spirit of an explorer, he confines himself to observing, and avoids expressing opinions, still he has succeeded in elucidating the mysterious causes which have resisted so many endeavours to colonize the country.

The Papuans are warlike, and very intelligent; quite able to appreciate and resent an aggression.

Though not possessing firearms, they would not compare unfavourably with the Zulus in physique and bravery. Their arms—the arrow, throwing-spear, and lance—are very deadly, some being poisoned, and the barbed head of others coming off in the wound. The belief that cannibalism is a cherished institution among them has not been confirmed; but they are hunters of human heads, upon which they seem to set the same value as the Indian on his scalps, procuring them in much the same manner—from which we must gather that they are practised in warfare. They cultivate largely, and rear pigs, and domesticate a few other animals. For a savage country the population is numerous. The climate of the southern portion of the island—the land lying low, based on steaming mud under a thick dank dripping jungle—is so unhealthy, that Signor d'Albertis and most of the crew of his steam-launch were seized with fever and ague a few days after entering it. Small as his party was, and eminently amicable as was his attitude towards the natives, he was met every-

where by distrust; and more often his passage up the river was opposed in strong force by canoes manned by armed natives.

Notwithstanding all the above drawbacks, no one can doubt that the inevitable destiny of British New Guinea is to be colonized by whites, and that in a very few years hence. Ceylon has been called the pendant pearl of her Majesty's Indian diadem. Anyone who has lived in Australia, and knows the views of the colonists and tone of their papers, must know full well they mean New Guinea soon to be one of the noblest gems in the British crown. As things are now, the prospect looks black indeed for the Papuans. An attempt of private adventurers to form a settlement is the most likely contingency. This, if conducted in sufficient force to hold ground in spite of the inevitable hostility of the natives, no matter how organized, controlled, and orderly, can only be followed by the same results as history, without one single exception, shows every other scheme of the kind to have been followed: the introduction of

intoxicants and firearms to the natives, encroachments by the settlers, reprisals on the part of the by this time well-armed natives, small wars (perhaps Isandlwanas), and an undying race-enmity until the extermination of the aborigines. It is earnestly to be hoped that every influence, no matter what—Aborigine Protection Society, Missionary Societies, Universal Peace Society, or any other—may be brought to bear on the authorities to induce them to restrain, as long as possible, any filibustering or semi-hostile attempt to make a forcible descent on shores (no matter how rich) where an interminable scene of bloodshed must ensue.

All who have seen the Papuan agree that his intelligence and industry is of a very high order for a savage; and state, like Signor d'Albertis, that he is undoubtedly capable of elevation into an able labourer if properly approached. It is believed that if he can be shown how to do a day's work (with a certainty of receiving suitable remuneration) he will apply himself as diligently to that as he does now to the building of his own

house, or planting of his own sweet potatoes. It is this mine of incalculable wealth which Papuan labour holds forth, which (after the obviously necessary consolidation of our empire in that part of the world) makes the annexation of New Guinea such an enormously advantageous consummation to us.

One means, then, of opening pacific relations with the Papuans is through missionary enterprise; but that has been fruitless, though it has been persisted in now for over thirty years. It is, in any case, a slow process; and to some minds not entirely without objection on purely *philanthropic* grounds.

The missionary in the south, if not a trader, is generally followed up so closely by the trader and adventurer that any beneficial teachings he may have conscientiously implanted are soon obliterated by the vices of civilized barbarism.

The idea which seems to me the most feasible for breaking the ice of Papuan reserve is by means of solitary white pioneers, who must be isolated

among the natives, prepared to trust to time and the event to release them. Startling as such a proposition might appear, I meant to devote myself to the work.

After explaining my plans, I feel certain that they will not be deemed those of a visionary or enthusiast. I would remind the reader that all important geographical discoveries have been achieved by solitary white explorers. I cannot at this moment call to mind a single extensive field of enterprise that has been opened up during the last hundred years by a large European expedition. But I go further among the jealous and suspicious Papuans; I would have a single white man in light marching order, quite unattended by any following whatever.

As proof of the practicability of this, I must tell you that it was by this very means that the Government of Tasmania was enabled to come to amicable terms with the natives, after having, for many years, used every endeavour in vain to hold communication with them.

Turn to your Hakluyt, and there you find more than one instance of far greater feats of bush-travelling, by men unequipped for the work, than a few months' residence by a fully prepared man among savages, however fierce, can possibly mean.

Who led the way to the fertile plains of the Far West, through trackless regions and hordes of crafty, bloodthirsty warriors, but the lonely trapper? who leads the *great rush* that peoples a wilderness in a month but the solitary pocket-digger or lost prospector? But why recall examples in this way? Their very plenty bewilders one. Perhaps, after all, it is nothing I propose to do.

For years I had read about it by day, dreamed of it at night, pondered over and revolved it in such shapes that it seemed I could not be mistaken in my conclusions.

Too hopeful I was. To some it may seem even pretentious on the part of a sailor, still in the lower grades of his craft, to affect to know a means of accomplishing what had baffled so many lands-

men. I have one comforting recollection, though—I would not be the first sailor who had returned to Mother Earth to find the scene of his labours in the same line as I proposed. I also count on my knowledge of navigation—a science in which I believe myself to be by no means unskilful—as one of my most important qualifications for the work in hand. For the rest, my robust health and sound constitution, and unusually wide experience of countries and peoples, both civilized and barbarian, will stand me in good stead.

Before leaving England I wished to procure everything that I should require. The total weight of my *impedimenta* would be forty-five pounds. Not to go into minute details, the following are the principal articles: a canvas hammock, capable of being formed into a tent, and a light woollen blanket. This hammock and blanket to be rolled up with my cooking-pot, or billy, and such spare provisions inside it as I may have. It will be carried over the shoulder, and the ends of the roll strapped together round the body, in the manner

known to the swagmen in the colonies as the horse-collar. A water-tight knapsack to contain one suit of under-flannels, journal, almanack, drawing-block, pencils, sewing materials, small line, and fishing-hooks; a few instruments and tools, among which will be a sextant, aneroid thermometer, saw and lancet, together with some spare ammunition.

I have learnt that the best head-dress for bush wear in all weathers is the Bedawi kafiya, a good-sized silk shawl, doubled and laid on the head so that the folded edge hangs down to about the tip of the nose; then by pressing a ring down on the head over the kafiya it is securely fastened on, while at the same time the front rises so as to shade the eyes, without obstructing the vision. The three loose flapping corners of the shawl make an effective shade for the upper part of the body in the hot sun, or may be taken up and tied tightly round the neck so as, if desirable, to muffle up the whole face in a storm or in a thorny jungle. The ring which I have spoken of as keeping the shawl

in its place is formed from a coil of stout cord —my lasso—tested to bear a strain of about 400 lb. My outer garments are a suit of stout loose No. 4 sailcloth "overalls," well supplied with pockets. Under these a shirt and drawers of light strong wool. I provide myself with two pair of woollen socks, but my boots and leggings of soft leather are so constructed that by the time the socks are worn out they will have become unnecessary.

In my belt I shall carry a light axe, the head of a peculiar pattern, adapting it for boring or acting as a chisel, secured on a long iron-bound buffalo-horn haft. In the front of the belt the revolver, and behind, 100 rounds of ammunition. The gun I propose to carry is a double smooth-bore.

To reach British New Guinea and land myself and accoutrements, I must take out with me on the deck of the steamer a light 18 foot whale-boat, lifeboat fitted and cutter-rigged, to Timour. I shall then have to look out for a small craft bound round the north coast of New Guinea, that

would drop me with an offing sufficient to render me invisible from the land, and as near 142° E. longitude as possible. I would then, after determining my position, endeavour to effect a landing during the night, unobserved by the natives. The point at which I should wish to land would be in about 142° 30′ E., at the foot of a range of hills. Having once put my foot on shore, I might bury provisions, if any remained in the boat; but I would certainly, like Pizarro, "burn my ships," that is to say, sink my boat—or, if a breeze, put her to sea again on her own account. At first it would be impossible to know whether I had been seen or not. I should try, by keeping to the higher elevations not looked down upon, to work my way inland for several days before revealing myself to any native. It is hard work. I have done it before in Central America. You must constantly act as if a native had his eye upon you. A hundred may be lurking unseen within spear-throw of you at any moment; but irksome as this vigilance is, it soon becomes habitual, and does not interfere in

the least with your powers of observation and taking note. A man does not go to bed before he is sleepy in such a situation, and let his hammock be slung high up in the branches of a tree, or his bivouac in the deepest recesses of the virgin forest, he sleeps *fast*, and has little time for dreaming. Ah! "You gentlemen of Piccadilly, that lounge in Rotten Row," you know little of the overwhelming delights the successfully roasted "flap-jack" affords the hungry bushman.

Once at this stage, I will speculate no further. My method of proceeding, and manner of mixing with the natives, will of course be ruled by circumstances which it would be rash even to conjecture. For my own part, I have not the slightest fear. My object would be to associate, even fraternize, with the natives over as great an extent of country as possible, at the same time to push southward towards the coast of Torres Straits. I should at every move determine my position. I would, of course, not be able to preserve or form any collection. I fear natural science would profit little

by any additions I could make to its botany or geology. But having been all my life a keen inquirer into everything that has come before my eyes during my wanderings, I might be able to form a pretty clear judgment of the resources and capabilities of the country. I certainly hope the Papuans would give me time to leave a few notes on the effects of the indigenous articles of food on my own health. Of zoology I possess, however, some smattering, and though I may not promise to emulate such savants as Wallace or D'Albertis, when in New Guinea, by giving a new species to science every day I am on shore, who knows what strange unimagined forms of animal life may not exist in the Alpine gorges and valleys of the gigantic anticlinal mountain-ranges known to be in the interior of the greatest terra incognita yet remaining in the world?

My first and main object would always be to study the people, not the anthropology of the Papuan, but to study them, their habits, and language, so that I might act as a serviceable inter-

preter and guide to any who might come after me. Should one of those chances that befall prevent my completing the programme, it surely would not happen before I had accomplished some good, though it be only the inserting of the point of a wedge for elevating the Papuan to a better understanding of the genuine Englishman's sentiments towards him.

For three months I remained in London working like a horse at my project. I called upon editors and secretaries until I was threatened with confinement as a dangerous lunatic. I corresponded with presidents and fellows of all manner of societies that might or might not aid me; but at the end of three months I found my funds running very low, and my chances of obtaining an equipment as remote as ever. It was very hopeless, heart-breaking work, and I knocked under at last. I was standing near Fenchurch Street Station one day, thinking that I should soon have to look out for a living about the docks, when I was suddenly accosted by a

captain under whom I had sailed a few years before.

"Hallo, Keane! what are you doing with yourself now? You're just the man I want; come down to the shipping office and sign."

On the spur of the moment, without asking a single question, I said, "I will;" and off to the shipping office we went, without my knowing what ship, what voyage, or even what rating I was to hold. I found the berth was second mate of the barquentine *Sparkling Foam*, on a voyage to Norway for a cargo of ice. A very interesting summer cruise I found it. It only occupied me two months.

I found the *Sparkling Foam* a very handy little craft. She was 250 tons register; and carried six A.B.'s, two boys, a cook and steward, which, with captain and two mates, brought all told up to twelve hands, a very full complement indeed for so small a vessel. After I had signed I wrote to my West-end landlord to resign my rooms for two or three months; and

then repaired to the Trafalgar Hotel, Leman Street, my sailor-town-residence, where I always have a sea-kit ready for emergencies of this sort.

It may be wondered why I do not live, when in sailor-town, at the Sailors' Home, the advantages of which, to Jack ashore, are popularly believed to be so great. I did so once. For the first nine years of my sea-life, I always boarded in the officers' quarters of that institution when attached to a ship in port, or putting in my naval-reserve drill. I had never found any difficulty, after my board was out, in obtaining credit on my advance-note for as much as three weeks or a month's board; and entirely discredited the almost daily complaints I heard of men and officers being summarily dismissed, and their effects seized, when owing for one week's board and lodging.

After having been a constant boarder for nine years, with a clear record, I remained on shore for three years, and then had to return to sea. My first move was to return to the Sailors' Home, as a base of operations in seeking employment. I

paid in advance one week's board; but at the end of two weeks I had secured a berth, but could not join my ship for a few days. I did not think this worth mentioning at the Home, as I never expected I should be called upon so soon to settle up, much less be come down on in the way I was at the end of my second week.

I returned to the Home from a visit to the ship I was going in, very hungry, after a walk to the Victoria Docks and back. I went straight up to my cabin, little thinking what would meet me there. As soon as I opened the door I found the cabin empty; thought I had mistaken the number; found I had not, but that all my clothes and my chest had really been taken away, and an envelope addressed to me left on my bed. I tore it open, and found a bill for one week's board and lodging. I left the Home without seeing the steward of my dormitory, or the superintendent. I was out of cash, and knew of no place I could get a farthing from for a day or two. I procured writing materials and stamp from a tobacconist who knew me, and

wrote for funds, which duly arrived by return of post.

In the meantime, what was I to do? I was as destitute a sailor in London as could be found. I had heard of the Straw-house, a refuge for destitute seamen. I inquired of the most destitute-looking men I could see round the place, and heard revelations about the Sailors' Home that astonished me. I found their treatment of me was only their customary way of dealing with English sailors. Foreigners, I found, are never turned out of the Home, because they are certain of obtaining employment before they run up an account for six weeks or so, which is more than can be met by the one month's advance-note. I was also told I would not be admitted to the Straw-house without a letter from the superintendent of the Home. In my ignorance I did not see what the Sailors' Home could have to do with an independent charity. I knew a little about it, and who were the people who contributed to its support. I had read a report of its doings, which had come out

at Exeter Hall during the May meetings. All my relatives belong to that better-off class of earnest Christians especially preyed upon and victimized by the ecclesiastical hawk and Gospel shark; so that I have been a good deal behind the scenes, and know the motive power, and, up till my present experience, believed a little in the result.

At the proper hour I and four others applied for admission to the Straw-house. Three of them young fellows, little more than grown boys, not more than two or three of whom are carried in a ship, so that berths for them are not easy to find; the other a worn-out veteran whom it would also be difficult to find employment for. I had been three years on shore, and looked little like a sailor.

We were let into the door, and a crusty old fellow behind a half-door growled out to us collectively, "Have you any discharges?"

All except myself produced greasy, dirty, torn fragments of discharges, which were examined and returned without comment. The old man was

the first to be dismissed. "I can't take you in; you've been too long ashore."

To what he went God knows! lots of them die in the streets every winter.

Then the three boys were ordered out, with "You've only been two or three years at sea; I can't take you in."

Then the old fellow said to me: "You've got no discharge; you look like a tailor's runner."

I replied, "I am a sailor; you can easily find that out."

"How long have you been at sea?"

"Nine years. I've just been turned out of the Sailors' Home."

"Mr. Baldwin" (the superintendent of the Home) "never turns any of you out without giving you a letter to come here."

I thought to myself, can it be possible that this Straw-house exists only as a save-all for the Sailors' Home to shunt its bad bargains on to. It shall not have the credit of shunting me anyhow, if I can't get in myself.

"It's too late to see the superintendent now, and I want to get in for a couple of nights only, as I am expecting money in two days. You ought to be able to tell a sailor when you talk to him."

"I'll soon find that out. How do you pass the fourth earing of a single topsail?" I knew the answer perfectly; it is one of the commonest questions an old sailor asks a youngster he wishes to take down. It belongs to the period of Nelson—almost, certainly, the last generation; like slinging a nun-buoy, or raising a mouse on a main-stay. I was so enraged at his asking me such a cruxy question that I could not bring myself to say "From forward under," which is the answer. There is not a merchant ship afloat with a fourth reef in her topsail.

"If you're going to get me into a ship with four reefs in her topsail, no thank you. I'll get out of this while I have the chance," and out into the street I went.

This was my first experience of the working of

a benevolent institution. I have since never lost an opportunity of investigating them, and I shall never lose an opportunity of publishing my experience; and, so far as my publisher will allow me, I will invite contradiction by giving names and data. I have since found out that the reason why I was treated so leniently in the matter of credit during the nine years I was a regular boarder in the Home was that an uncle of mine, without my knowing it, had guaranteed the payment of all debts I might incur for board or lodging. I am happy to say he was never called upon, as I had always paid myself. This time I had not been seen for three years. My uncle's obligation was thought likely to have lapsed, and required renewing; hence I was no longer privileged, but was treated as other boarders had been, to my no little surprise when I found what that treatment was.

I was now on the streets, thrown really and entirely on my own resources for the first time in my life. I knew of no place to go to. I might,

it is true, *live* out until my letter came; but it was very cold at night, and I was hungry to start with. As the latter want pressed me most just then, I sold my two-guinea nearly new overcoat for two shillings, the most I could get for it.

With my two shillings I repaired to the Trafalgar Hotel, and for eightpence was supplied with hot coffee, bread, and sausages, really "sufficient for six persons," as the cookery book often delusively puts it. I also secured a clean bed for two nights for a shilling. Next day the landlord observed that I only ate one small meal, and generously offered to put me on his books as a boarder when he found I was a sailor. I have never lived anywhere else in the East-End since for comfort, cleanliness, and moderate charges; the Sailor's Home will bear no comparison whatever with the Trafalgar. The landlord has been a seafarer himself, and is Secretary of the Amalgamated British Seaman's Protection Society, while his beafsteak puddings are—"If you would praise Cæsar, say Cæsar, go no farther."

It was to Mr. Lind, then, that I went to get my

sea-kit and my advance-note cashed, before I boarded the *Sparkling Foam* of Whitstable. Out of the docks we hauled on the same day. Time was not so much an object with us, so the captain would not take a tow down the river. It was pretty hard to return to my old work. It was so long since I had handled a rope that my hands, the only personal belonging of which I am a little vain on shore, were as delicate as a lady's; and, to add to my discomfort, the wind set in from the eastward, which kept us backing and filling incessantly, never a minute without a rope in one's hand. On the second day, of course, my hands were red-raw on the palm side, and chipped and sore on the back; but it had to be endured, as I was second mate and must lead everywhere. When one's hands are in this state, taking hold of a rope is like grasping a red-hot bar of iron. I have seen the blood oozing from the inside of my hands at fifty spots like little dewdrops, and then had to seize hold of a rough rope and lay all my weight on it. This sort of suffering makes a man pay

very dearly for a little comparative leisure on shore if he has to go to sea again.

We had ten days of this "long river and short tacks," the wind backing round and heading us until we had turned and dropped through Yarmouth Roads; and then came a bit of a slant off the land that put us round the outer Dudgeon, and out into the North Sea. By this time we had settled down, and found we all agreed splendidly; the captain, mate, and I hit it off perfectly. The men all had to own to the disadvantages levelled at in the song—a new sea-song, as may be seen. Jack is supposed to be looking for a ship:

"'What countryman are you? come, tell me the truth,'
I answered him, 'Captain, I'm English by birth;
I've no chills, nor fevers, nor any such stuff:
My appetite's good, when I'm not on the spree,
And I don't growl without reason—I'm too long going to sea.'"

So much of the new sea-song is probably enough for the reader. It goes on to tell how the captain has no use for such as he, Nor-nor-wegians and Diegos being more his fancy.

Our captain was too good a seaman himself not to know the superiority of his own countrymen over foreigners, and took care that he would ship nothing else if he could help; so that we had only two foreigners—the steward, a Spaniard, and one sailor, a German. It is utterly beyond my comprehension how captains and officers can dare to venture to sea with a foreign crew, and yet 75 per cent. of the men manning our merchant ships are foreigners to-day; a condition of things, a suicidal freak of national madness passing understanding on the part of a nation founded on and sustained by its marine, dependent for very existence on food brought across the ocean. It is the fable inverted here—it is the stomach which refuses duty first. The German navy is to-day manned by men trained in English ships, while men of all countries except France are encouraged to engage in English ships by their own authorities. One of the first causes making foreigners acceptable to us is always overlooked. It is to be found in the fact that the Board of Trade has established a standard of ac-

quirements in its examinations for officers' certificates, the attaining of which standard has come to be looked upon as the utmost an officer in the merchant service need accomplish. Consequently, with here and there an exception, the abilities and skill in special branches of duty of our mates have deteriorated down to the Board of Trade examiners' standard throughout the entire merchant marine. So degenerate and incompetent is the Board of Trade master and mate of to-day, that he fears to expose his inability to a crew of his own countrymen, and therefore carries strangers, ignorant of our language, usages, or laws, who cannot detect a like ignorance in himself; while many owners encourage it to simply keep down wages. I am not sheltering myself under a generalization. I make a grave charge. Deplorable and humiliating as it is to confess, it is from experience in too many cases I deduce my fact. One remedy should be applied at once. It will have the effect of stopping any increase in the foreign element among our seamen. Let inability to speak

the language incapacitate (as it certainly does) a man for shipping as an able seaman in an English ship. Scenes like this would follow at shipping offices.

Shipping master, with articles before him to seaman engaging: "What's your name?"

Captain (interposing): "Mike Wilson."

Shipping clerk: "You must not answer for the man, captain." Then to man: "Where were you born?"

Board of Trade runner behind man whispers to him, and man says: "Shields."

Shipping clerk: "If that man does not answer for himself he must leave the office. Now, sir, how old are you, sir?"

Man, after hesitation: "Michael Massaniello."

Shipping clerk: "How old are you, sir?"

Man, without hesitation: "Two-pun-ten."

Shipping clerk: "I ask you once more, how—old—are—you?"

Man, desperately: "Half-mons-avance."

Shipping clerk, to captain: "You cannot ship that man as an A.B. in an English ship. I may

tell you also that if you had succeeded in doing so, your ship being inefficiently manned, should any accident befall you, your owner would lose his insurance, also that the law would allow the fullest compensation for any loss or injuries received through the ship. Moreover, your ship being legally unseaworthy with regard to her crew, all your agreements with shippers, brokers, and your charter-party, would be invalidated."

So the man was turned out of the office. When he was come outside they said unto him, say "Discharge," and he said "Dissharge." So they fell upon him and slew him.

With such fancies as these I often wiled away a watch, feeling all the security of an English bottom, and ready confidence-inspiring English crew under me. But I fear the evil has gone too far; if no more foreigners were to enter the service to learn the language from to-day, so many have already acquired English that the need may be past before England can restore her own trained seamen to the numerical strength of twenty years ago.

CHAPTER VI.

Recollections of a Winter Voyage in the North Sea—Destruction to Nets—In Norway—Taking in Ice—Return to England.

It was many years since I had been in the North Sea before this trip, and then it had been in the winter-time, and how different the vessel and weather! I cannot help pausing to go back nine years, and chat of that voyage. I joined the schooner *Mayflower* in Hull as mate. It was the month of October, the winter before us; a little vessel of 110 tons, deep with coals, under us, bound for Caen, in Normandy. As soon as we put out, gales set in. The skipper was sixty-five years of age, very stout, and, to say the least, crotchety. The crew forward were all young Scandinavians and Teutons, picked up cheap in continental ports during the summer. The coast used to be called the training school of our best seamen; now it is

the foreigners' back-door into the English navy, for, hailing as Heligolanders, many Germans, Swedes and Norwegians actually do get into her Majesty's ships. Besides these the captain's son was on board, a gawky youth of seventeen, thoroughly, utterly useless; I would not have carried him for ballast if he'd come for nothing, and brought his own grub. What a thrashing at it we had, days and days we took out of the ring of the anchor in one roadstead or another. Gale after gale we were hove to in, or ran before, for some harbour of refuge. A dozen times we slipped by or round sands and shoals miraculously. I have spent seven days streaming with water without leaving the deck of that little vessel for one minute. Often and often I have been twenty-four hours at continuous labour, and once stood twelve hours at the tiller. The day we got down to Beachy Head the wind came away from the westward, and we put across Channel; but before nightfall it freshened up, and backed so far into the southward that we could not fetch Havre, and had to stay and reach over to the

English shore to hold our own. Towards midnight the wind increased, and we had to shorten down to a close-reefed mainsail, stay-foresail, and foretopsail. As we drew in upon the English land we had to wear to stand off; for though a hard gale was coming on, we did not care to run back to the Downs among the shipping brought up there before daylight. The old man took the tiller to wear, and had three men and his son to jibe the close-reefed mainsail along with him. I was forward working the fore-yard and stay-foresail. As she jibed the Deutschers aft let the main-boom get away with them somehow, and down it came over the side in two pieces; the topping-liftbolts had drawn at the masthead. It took all the quarter-deck bulwarks on one side with it. There was nothing now but to keep her before it, and cut away wreck. For two hours we ran up Channel before we cleared up aft and got the foretopsail in. I fear my language that night to those useless stupefied young foreigners could not be entered at Stationers' Hall. The wind had now increased to a W.S.W. hurricane. We

showed no stitch of canvas but the stay-foresail to keep her before it. Yet it appeared, as we flew past the lights, that we would be up to the South Foreland before daylight. When day at length broke, how it howled and blew, every horrible choppy channel sea running right over our wallowing little hull! I had sent the men below for safety. I had been at the tiller for four hours, the skipper standing beside me. When it became light enough to see round, close on the starboard bow was a big North American built vessel on her beam-ends, cargo shifted, and mizzen-mast gone; on the other bow was a brig we were overhauling. All round on every side of us was a fleet of vessels running for the Downs, and not a few of them damaged in their top hamper, very few with more than a foretopmast-staysail set. I don't think I ever saw such a dismal scene as that fleet under bare poles looked that leaden-grey wild morning. Some we passed within a biscuit-throw, some passed us. A few set lower topsails at daybreak, but we kept on under bare poles, bringing up to both

anchors in the Downs, taking out the chains to the "bitter ends."

When the weather moderated again we went into Margate for a new boom, and at last, after more than one attempt, we reached Caen in the middle of December. We left Hull in the middle of October. The docks at Caen are some twelve miles up a canal from the lock-gates at the sea. This distance the small vessels that go there have to be towed by horses on a tow-path. What a ridiculous contrast our new mode of proceeding presented to the seamanship, and no mistake, that was required in the North Sea! A coasting sailor has to be a bit of a bargee as well as a most thorough seaman. In Caen it froze hard for some days. By the time we were ready for sea again the canal was frozen over, and we had to remain idle until a small steamer that was expected came up and broke the ice. After the skipper received his freight he went on the spree with two or three other North-country coasting skippers. At such times, "let men say we be men of good government; being governed as

the sea is, by our noble and chaste mistress the moon," for we all took after the lunatic son.

I was called up late one night by the son blubbering, crying, and begging me to come quick, his "father was drowning." I could not see how that could be, for the ice all over the dock would have borne a horse and cart. I went up though, knowing there must be something the matter. On looking over the side, there was the old fellow jammed into the hole in the ice the cook had broken to draw water through. He was too stout to fall through the small hole, sticking at the waist. It took four of us to extricate him, and even then we had to chip the ice all round him. He explained that he had mistaken the draw-bucket lanyard hanging overboard for the side-ladder, and stepped into the hole.

He had another narrow escape of drowning while I was with him. I saw a boat belonging to another coaster sculling off to us with our old man in it. As he came close alongside, I saw him stand up to get at his breeches-pocket, and noticed he was a

little unsteady and mellow. I looked away for a moment and then looked back; the boat was there and the boy that had been sculling it, but no skipper. A yard or two astern of the boat, bobbing on the ripples, floated side by side a pair of wooden *sabots*, all the vestige of our poor skipper visible. He must have gone straight down, for it was a good half-minute before he came up, and the boy reached him an oar and helped him into the boat. It appeared he had taken twopence from his pocket, stopped the boy pulling fortunately, and placing the twopence in the boy's hand, without a word leant gracefully back and plumped head first into the water.

The poor old fellow used to keep us alive at such times; his growling and grumbling was incessant. But the worst of it was he would do no marketing when he was on the spree, and we used to get nothing to eat, and then the men would not work. A row in a small ship may be very funny sometimes. I remember one we had. The son was the cause of it. The old man was very fond of

his son; but the unfortunate boy was a little gone in the head. Well, this boy used to spend a great deal of his time in the forecastle with the foreigners. One day he did something below which provoked a tall young Swede to strike him, and the idiot struck the Swede back. The first I knew of it was from the old man. He came toddling and puffing: "They're murdering our Jock in the forecastle!" he gasped.

I ran forward to the scuttle, and heard howls and screeches mingled with Swedish curses and shouts.

"Stop that!" I shouted, "and come up on deck this minute."

But the yells of "Murder! murder! Father! father!" went on. I stepped over for an iron bolt off the windlass, and was coming back to the scuttle to go below, when the son rushed on deck, his face covered with tears and blood. As the son popped out, the father popped in, in sitting posture. The old man just fitted the scuttle like a cork, effectually cutting off the boy's pursuer, it appeared.

"Gang aft, and lock yourself in my cabin; I'll no let 'em up till you're safe," said the skipper, sitting firmly in the open hatchway.

But the boy would not go aft; he stood there blubbering, and trying to tell his father all about it. I felt the boy was safe enough for some time; I didn't believe there was anybody below strong enough to heave the old man's eighteen stone out of the way. But all at once the old fellow emitted a succession of groans, making hideous grimaces, interspersed with exclamations, "I canna stan' 't; I canna beer 't langer! Gang aft, ye fule! gang aft!" until at length he sprang up with a yell and the activity of a saltimbanque.

The Swede emerged, holding a large sail-needle in his hand, with which he had at length dislodged the old man nobly holding the pass; but only after many attempts to reach a sufficiently sensitive part. The brute looked to have lost all control of himself from passion. These young Norsemen are subject to going berserker. I rushed between him and the boy, and raised the bar. When he

saw the bar coming down he backed a little; then he cried fiercely, "Yah, I fights you too!"

I said, "Hold on then! Give us a show to get my coat off; and drop that needle, and I'll drop this bar."

He threw the needle down, I dropped the bar, and proceeded to divest myself of jacket and jersey. Imitating me, he also began to take his jacket off. It was one of those tight sheepskin Norwegian jackets that require a good deal of pulling to get the arms out of the sleeves. As soon as he had thrown it back over his shoulders, and before he had given one tug to free his arms, the old man rushed up behind and seized him by the leather jacket that now held his arms securely behind him. When the old man had him at that disadvantage, he might as well have tried to run away with the rock of Gibraltar on his back. He did struggle and struggle desperately, but he was like a child to the skipper, and at length gave in and cooled down. He was made to apologize though, and was quiet enough afterwards.

That was not the only disturbance the wretched

boy caused in the vessel. He led me into trouble in the long-run, and was the cause of my leaving, taking my discharge before I would otherwise have done. If I recall the time spent in that schooner now, nothing but visions of dull grey sky and foaming grey raging sea are before me during the short days, with here and there long lines of breakers to leeward, or great, looming, black, rocky promontories. So drenched with rain and spray do I seem to have been, that I must have been rehearsing some future diluvial existence at a normal temperature below freezing. But by far the greater portion of that winter is remembered as night darkness over all the sea. From December to March, through snow-squalls from the north-east, and rain-storms from the south-west, we at length reached that part of the Fife shore, near Kirkcaldy, that the schooner belonged to, and which the old man called his home. It was a sheltered bay without a name, but with a sandy beach, on which the little craft could be safely beached, after the manner of an Arab dhow,

opposite the master's front-door, just at the bottom of his garden. Some care in putting on the hard was necessary, for there was an ugly big stone opposite the corner of the garden where the horseradish-bed was; but if we pointed a little to the eastward of the large apple-tree straight for the two big kail-runts, she would run up on the beach without a bump. By running a line away to the front-door knocker, and another to a fir-plantation on the starboard bow, we managed to haul her up on the sand at the top of the spring-tide, so that it would not be likely she would come off till next springs. The old woman came on board to live, and took charge of the cooking at once. A thrifty old lady she was. It was very amusing to see her carrying a bowl of porridge, or the dinner-kids containing two potatoes and half a pound of braxy each man, to the forecastle scuttle, and hand them down saying, "Eat as mich as ye can, my lads; we like fine to see ye eat enough."

The old people seemed well set up in worldly gear; their house and garden were their own, and

the old man came out now in a black coat and top hat. The daughter, too, a pretty girl about eighteen, who was teaching at a school near, used to come on board in the evening to sit in the cabin. I generally went up the garden with the son for my meals. The provender, though somewhat frugal in variety, was substantial and wholesome, some form of oatmeal, or kind of cake, forming the principal articles in the bill of fare. After the terrible winter on the coast, we found the old man's home a glorious haven, none of us wished to leave the schooner, and the old man asked us to stop by her for his summer voyages. Unfortunately for me, the old girl fancied that her daughter Janet and I were becoming too friendly. I will not deny on my part that I thought her a very pretty girl, and liked her company vastly. After a fortnight I found I was not asked up to the house in the evening when Janet came home; and when we next met, Janet was very shy and constrained, which made me sure her mother had been speaking to her about me.

On the third Sunday things came to a head. The

mother, Janet, and the silly boy were on board; Janet and the boy were in the cabin, I in my cabin close at hand. I heard Janet tell her brother not to steal any more currants, two or three times; but as he seemed to keep on doing it, I stepped out to stop him. As I entered the cabin, I saw the boy open the door of the locker where the small stores were kept, and just as he was putting his hand in for currants, his sister banged the door to on his fingers. I know she did not intend to do it, only to shut the door before his hand was in. The boy turned round, and seizing a three-legged stool, on which the old woman used to sit before the fire roasting and rubbing her shins, before I could stop him, struck his sister with all his might on the breast, knocking her down in a dead faint. I drew off, and hit him under the ear, knocking him down in his turn; and so mad was I, that I gave him a savage kick on the head when he was down. I then picked his sister up. It looked very much as if it was all over with her. I laid her on the cabin-table, and rushed on deck to tell

her mother. The boy had been beforehand with me, and the auld wife greeted me with a torrent of abuse for ill-treating her Jock. I straightway knocked that youth down again in front of his mother, and she thereupon fell upon me tooth and nail. I fled from her from side to side of the little deck, trying to get her to understand that her daughter was dying.

"For God's sake go down to Janet; that young fiend has killed her!"

At first she would not heed me; she would make a dash at me.

"I'll Janet ye, I will! What's Janet to ye? Janet's no for sickin cattle as ye."

But at last she went below, and then there was another hullaballoo. Jock was sent for a doctor (he never went). I was blamed incoherently by the mother for all. I knew the old man was enjoying an afternoon nap up at the house, so I went and told him calmly the facts of the case, adding that I really thought his daughter must be seriously hurt, as the blow with the stool—crocket, I think it is

called—had been a terrible one. The old man was very sensible over it; said it was not the first time the boy had struck his sister. He told me, moreover, that the old woman was so fond of her half-loony son, that my time in the vessel was up, for the wife would never forgive me for striking her son.

We then went on board again together. Janet had recovered a little, but was still in great pain. Her mother would not speak to me, though she had heard some of the truth from her daughter. That night the skipper told me that the wife had decided that either she or I could not remain by the ship. We get all our political economists from Scotland, so go I had to. Though I have never heard of the good people since, I have not forgotten Janet. I suppose the old woman has by this time found a canny Scot for her daughter, with a patrimony conducing to matrimony. "'Twas ever thus!"

I have been gossiping about that winter cruise on the deck of the *Sparkling Foam* in midsummer. The water smooth as a mill-pond, the weather as

fine as the Mediterranean. Days so long that we have hardly any night—one long round of bright sunshine. The contrast between our wild English coast in winter, and our beautiful emerald-encircled shores in summer, is such as no other quarter of the globe presents. No wonder our ships and yachts are built to meet *all* weathers. We have no business to go smooth-water sailing with American toy-boats.

As we slipped along before pleasant summer breezes, we caught mackerel and gurnets by the dozen, and frequently bought boxes of fish, weighing a hundred pounds or more, from the fishing-smacks for a quarter of a pound of tobacco. The sea gives a healthy man a gluttonous appetite; day after day I have eaten two large mackerel, besides a slice of beef or pork, bread, butter, coffee, etc., for breakfast, a plaice of two and a half pound at its proper place in the dinner menu, and two mackerel, with sundries, at tea. Between fine weather, feeding, and good-humour, we all grew very noticeably fatter.

As we neared the Norwegian coast, we came among more fishermen. It was very hard to keep clear of the poor fellows' drift-nets. We had a small bolt, three feet below water, working out of our stem, sticking out about two inches; and one night so much fishing-net fouled this, that it towed astern in great brown waving folds as far as we could see, and stopped our steerage-way with a five-knot breeze, until we cut it adrift with cutlasses, sharpened and lashed on oars.

What a race of bearded giants those fair Norwegian fishermen are, in their odd-looking decked boats, cutter-rigged, and as round as apples! We were sailing through a close fleet of them one day in with the Naze. I had the watch, and was giving way more perhaps than the captain might have approved of. I had altered my course several times to pass to leeward of boats hanging to their nets, but at length I was obliged to come back to my course, which unfortunately at that moment took me about a ship's length to windward of another poor fellow, and of course right through

his drift-net, cutting away his whole "shoot." How those great fellows did roar and curse! they woke the skipper up, who was having a nap below. They stamped, they shouted, made no attempt to pick up their nets, but made sail and followed us. I thought they meant to board us; and when one thinks that they might have been ruined men—probably were, through us—the provocation was enough to make men do some wild justice. Bear in mind it was not wilful on our part, but men do not consider points of law, or resignedly accept "the act of God, rats, or the Queen's enemies," at such moments.

There were half a dozen of them in the boat, five stalwart young Norsemen, and one old Viking with a voice like a bull. I grew a little nervous as I saw them overhauling us; it seemed likely we were in for a sea fight. There was no knowing what desperate revenge these giants, with their wild sea-rover blood up, might not attempt. How glad I was at that moment we had none of their countrymen among us! we were all English on

board our ship, but two, at any rate. The captain must have seen some concern in my face, for he said, laughing:

"Don't mind them; I've been on this coast before. Go forward and flatten down the sheets fore and aft; I'll put her on a wind in a minute."

I did as the captain told me, and by the time I came aft again the Norwegian was about a couple of boat-lengths astern, and if he kept overhauling us would be alongside in two minutes. The fishermen had armed themselves with pieces of iron chain, and a pole or two; and the old Viking, with his streaming beard and flashing eyes, stood in the bow ready to shout, "Boarders away!"

Our captain told the man at the wheel to put the helm down and bring the little *Sparkling Foam* to the wind. Up she came, heeling gently to the breeze. As we did so, we began to draw away from the enemy, and widened the distance every moment. These Norwegian boats can sail on a wind, or anyhow; but we soon let them see we had the heels of them. On one point we were too good a chase.

Our captain knew what his little vessel could do, and only laughed at our pursuers dropping rapidly astern.

They soon gave up the chase, but we heard their curses flung over the water at us from an incredible distance astern. I don't know that I ever heard finer, clearer, or louder voices. That high note, which carries such a distance in the "Coo-*eeh*" of the Australian blackfellow, and the "You Georg-*ee*" of the anxious mother at home,* is not necessary to the Norse voice; it is a grand, bass, thundering, far-reaching hail. Not till I had been to Norway could I guess where Christine Nilsson got her wonderful low notes from.

We were bound to a little port called Kraagaro, and one glorious morning we hove-to off the bold Norwegian highlands to windward of the fiord we were to enter. It is a fearsome, forbidding coast, albeit one of the best lighted in the world, with

* Can the diminutive *ee* have come to be attached to names in so many languages to admit of the final high note in drawing attention?

the sea deep to the mighty fir-clad bluffs and capes. Sailing along it, close in, as may be done, one becomes oppressed with grandeur. Each minute opens up a new marvel in Nature's stupendous granite rockery. We become weary of variety, as wonder after wonder opens before us in precipice, fantastic mountain, forest-clad hill, and dark ravine. Gloomy frowning aspect as this land presents, the whole coast is one network of refuges from the sea. It is probable that all the harbours of Norway will never be known. Whales have strayed into the fiords, and lived within the maze for years, unable to find the way out, to the knowledge of the fishermen living in the region, who have eventually killed them. The harbour of Kraagaro is not a deep fiord, though the entrance from the open sea is between rocks as close as pierheads, and the channel for half a mile so narrow that from the vessel's side one could frequently touch the rocks with a boat-hook; and in the transparent water the rocks beneath appear to be within a foot of our planks. It requires nice

piloting under sail, but our native pilot made light of it.

There is a tradition among the people here that an English brig drove down on the land in a heavy gale, and drifted through this intricate channel at night unsteered. I believe it, but wonder none the less; the chances against her must have been millions to one. Inside there is a more open sheet of water between high hills, on the slopes of which the clean little town is built. From this harbour two or three deep indentations wind back among the hills. The captain went on shore at the town to transact his business, and we sailed farther on into the land; the narrow channel being now dark and of great depth, now passing within a few feet of the rocks, now caught aback with an eddy of wind round an angle of some sheer towering cliff or off some lofty pine-clad peak for another mile, until we seem to have left the sea behind for ever, and have lost our way in the forest. Here at the head of a creek we haul alongside a slight wooden wharf, and moor with a couple of hauling-lines as

secure as if in a graving-dock. All around us rise steep hills, placing us at the bottom of an inverted cone, its sides clothed with fir-trees, fern, flowers, and underwood. Not a habitation or yard of cultivation is visible among the woods. If it were not for a concave iron screen facing a long timber-shoot on trestles that reached away back and upwards to the mountain-side, disappearing among the trees, it would have been hard to believe that we had not been brought there to provide a subject for a tale by some Hans Andersen of the next century—as babes in the wood perhaps, on a scale in keeping with an advanced age.

The captain rejoined us within an hour of the time; we had the sails fast and the vessel moored, though mooring was quite superfluous, so completely sheltered were we from wind, and so narrow was the blind extremity into which the vessel had been worked. I was enchanted with the scene; but the old mate took things in a very matter-of-fact way. I never saw him step on shore the whole time we were there. He was a man long past his prime—

one of that far too large class of first-rate seamen who find the Board of Trade too much for them. He had come in at the hawse-pipe, and risen gradually through every grade to the quarter-deck. He had, as a young man, passed his first examination and obtained a second mate's certificate, which no man could have been better qualified to hold. In the ordinary slow course of a man without interest, by steadiness and faithful continuous service, after some years he had again found himself in a position to go through all the detention expense, and worry attending the second examination to obtain a chief mate's certificate. But he now found himself getting into staid manhood, his youthful keenness and ardour blunted. He found his preparation for an exhaustive examination in comparatively elementary subjects a greater trial than he had expected, for though he undoubtedly must have been a seaman and navigator of the first abilities, he owned that he only just scraped through details which a National schoolboy would have laughed at. Since the last ordeal before the

Board of Trade examiners he had never been in circumstances which would enable him to try for his final examination as master. He had married young, and the necessity of supporting a wife and family had compelled him to keep in constant employment, never being in possession of more money than would provide for his wants; so that it had been out of the question for him to make the break in his employment, and inroad on his purse, which the month's schooling on shore, fees, and incidentals would cost him to obtain a master's certificate—even when long past middle life, and when through pure merit he had time and again been offered a ship as master. This system of an examination for every grade is a cruel bar to the advancement of many of our finest seamen.

In no other profession is a man in middle life, who has been practising his profession from childhood, called upon to undergo a vexatious and frivolous examination in the veriest learned-by-rote rudiments of his work. In all other countries, and in her Majesty's service, a youth of eighteen can

pass his final examination in general or special education, and leaves his school-days behind him with certificates of more or less promise; after which he can win his way by merit, practical ability, and experience, knowing what prospects in life he has before him, unencumbered by any dread that he may break down in the middle of his career by want of ability to revert readily to his A B C., which may arise from a hundred causes, no way detracting from his fitness for advancement in his profession. No wonder our poor old mate's life was soured, and he took his simple pleasures sadly; his pipe and his wife's letters made up the sum of his enjoyments. His duties were habitually carried out with the perfect skill of a *master* in our *mystery;* but he had long given up hope of ever being able to fill the post of a master, for which no man could have been more fitted. His was a pitiful case, but a very, very common one.

Our captain was an example of the other extreme. His father was a shipowner; the barquentine we were in was owned by his father.

At the earliest age at which he was eligible, with every advantage which money and leisure could afford, he had obtained his second mate's certificate, jumping at once into a berth in one of his father's vessels—sure of the highest credentials, with which, as soon as the required period of service in that grade was fulfilled, he again went before the examiners, confident in his perfect preparation, of course making child's play of the questions. Another term as mate, and he obtained his master's certificate and a command at twenty-two—fresh from school, one might say. He is now thirty years of age, and at the period of my story, lost two ships, had his certificate suspended twice, and I verily believe if he was asked how he *knew* the world was round, he could not tell. Though eminently unscientific, unlike most common-pass-men he did love the practical part of his work; he was a downright smart seaman, and could sail and work a ship with the best. Most Board of Trade made officers I have been with have held no other qualifications for their situations than the simply legal right

conferred on them by the fact of their having been granted a piece of parchment with certain names, statements, and figures on it.

I was coming home from the Colonies by way of Cape Horn, in as fine an iron ship as I ever put my foot on board of.* We were hove-to in a heavy gale, when our cargo of grain shifted. Our captain was thirty years of age, and had been in command of this very ship on two long round-voyages before; and yet so astonishingly, incredibly ignorant was that man that he wore the ship round with her lame side to the sea to upright her. It cost him two men overboard, three men with broken limbs, two boats, his midship-bridge, a Sir William Thomson compass, and, I hope, gave him a lesson for life.

I wish the President of the Board of Trade would come to sea with me, and see some of the awesome pranks and cantrips the *protégés* of that department indulge in on the high seas. If he could see them knocking the good ships against one another, hammering them on rocks, and be-

* The *Kapunda*, now lost through the established practice of not showing side-lights on "blue-water."

devilling them in and out of hurricanes, he would agree with me that it is nothing but the almost indestructible materials of which ships are built nowadays that prevents the disappearance of half our marine to-morrow. What with iron and steel in hull and top, the most wilful fool on earth cannot do more than keep up the average of destruction among shipping. Did I look forward to the life of a seaman as my future, "I would croak like a raven. I would bode—I would bode." We in England have neighbours across the silver streak who know better than legislate themselves off the surface of the waters. We have in our own day the case of the American mercantile marine before us; the cause was as disproportionate to the effects as the result was sudden and complete. In my lifetime I expect to see the blood-red rag, the prettiest speck in the blue, as rare as the stars and stripes are now. The brand of Cain, the badge of infamy, is upon our ships. Plimsoll's mark, so-called—no more that noble man's mark than it is mine—was the beginning of the end.

Here in Kraagaro we saw some of the fruits of laws made amidst agitation, ostensibly in the interest of seamen, but really by the very oppressing class in their own interest, against whom the seaman must be protected if he is to live. As we came through the harbour we counted a dozen fine old English-built hulls that had been sailing for years under the Norwegian flag, and might sail so for many years to come. They had been sold to Norway for an old song during the cruel condemning scare, when many a poor man whose life-accumulated all was in his old tub of a timber drogher or collier, was pounced upon and made a scapegoat to carry off the sins of a wealthy influential section of cold-blooded calculating murderers, the owners of highly-insured deliberately castaway "job lots" of steamers. My present captain called my attention to these old English ships, and bitter were his remarks. I have reproduced some of his views.

When not on the Board of Trade he was good-humoured enough; just as jolly and companion-

able a man as I have met. The first evening in harbour he asked me to come on shore with him for a walk in the woods, and a look in the ice store-house. We stepped on to the jetty alongside, and walked up to the wooden shoot I have before mentioned. It was about as wide as those small tracks one sees in mines for hand-trucks, but had no rails, only four lines of plates about as wide as carriage-wheel tires. Along each side of the shoot was a raised timber guard about half a foot high. Once on it, we could see it went straight off up among the hills for half a mile or more, sometimes crossing deep ravines on lofty fir trestles, in places passing between high rocks, and through cuttings; but all along on both sides was nothing but wild wood and scrub or naked stone. We set off to walk up the shoot. The endless changes in the aspect of the sea can never be exhausted in interest to an admirer of Nature in all her various moods; but not having anything in common with the beauties of the land scenery, to a man fresh from the sea how intense is the wonder and delight ex-

perienced on being thrown suddenly amidst all the lovely depths of a Norwegian forest, contrasting so with his late experience. One becomes childish. In the half mile we travelled to the ice house I ran from the timbered path fifty times to pluck a flower, catch an insect, cut a stick, or perform some other trick of boyhood. The captain was elated, too, I saw, though he did not know it, and would not have been able to tell why had he felt so. Near the ice-house we heard some tinkling bells in the depths of the wood, and the captain called me from a wild strawberry bed, off which I could fill my hat without moving five yards from the one spot, to follow him. Away we went, the pair of us gay and light-hearted enough for the whole "four and twenty little boys" of the poem. After tearing through underwood, and clambering over rocks under the dark gloomy firs we came upon an open glade on which half-a-dozen cows were grazing, we begged a hatful of new milk from the cowherd, and returned to the bank whereon the ripe strawberries grew. Not a hundred yards from this we came upon a

drift of unmelted snow in a large crevice in the rocks near the place where the winter's harvest of ice was stored. This was nothing but a large, boarded shed fifty yards square, only one storied, the ice being all stowed beneath the ground probably in a natural hollow in the rocks. The wooden track or shoot which we had followed to this place, led into a closed door, but another track came out of another door, and continued away further up among the hills. It was light nearly the whole night, so it did not matter how long we were away, and off we started following the second railed shoot. The forest became denser, its depths more murky and ghostlike; the rocks, if possible, were more rugged, the undeviating straight line of that shoot, cut through and over all, still up, up, till just as we were beginning to question if it might not be miles in length, and were thinking of turning back, we came upon Queen Mab's Grotto. From the gloomy forest we suddenly emerged into a burst of colour, light and beauty, on the sandy margin of a deep green lake, almost circular in form, about a quarter of a mile across.

Except just at the point where we struck it, it is walled round on every side by naked perpendicular rocks, twenty or thirty feet high. The water is deliciously cool and good to drink, clearer or cleaner water it would be impossible to find. Fish there are in the lake in great numbers, but they can only help to purify it. In China it is customary to keep a few live fish in the larger vessels in which the household supply of water is kept for purposes of purification, and as a precaution against poison. I afterwards used the ice we shipped none the less freely for having seen the source from which it came. All the tons of crystal pure ice we took from here went to fish transporters to be packed in boxes with herrings and mackerel, while that disgusting filth collected from the surfaces of noisome ponds and marshes in the vicinity of London finds its way into human stomachs. The distance from the ship to the lake was about a mile, and its elevation from the level of the harbour about eight hundred feet. After turning in I was agreeably surprised to hear few mosquitoes about. I had

fully expected, from accounts I had heard, to meet them almost as thick as I did in Archangel in the White Sea. So bad are they there that they make a haze over the land. I have painted ship green outside, and the clouds of mosquitoes that stuck to the paint before it was dry turned it grey. I never was bitten by a mosquito the whole time we were in Kraagaro, though I did occasionally hear the ping of a blood relation. Like the bullet, the sound of which the "cousins'" ping exactly resembles, so long as you can hear it, it is harmless, only when they stop their music you begin to box your own ears in frantic efforts to start them singing again.

We were two days discharging our ballast, and sweeping the hold out clean as the deck. Then we began taking in ice. The work is very easy; we of the ship had nothing to do with it. Three Norwegians put up their own gear; merely rigging temporary shoots from the big shoot down on board the ship. The ice is made to do all the hard work itself, the men merely guiding and turning it with great light steel nippers. The blocks are as

big as a sea-chest and weigh three or four hundred pounds.

We can see from the ship about a quarter of a mile up the big shoot before it becomes merged in the forest. Suddenly out of the forest rushes a bright, glittering cube of ice, flashing in the sunlight. Down towards us it glides swift as the wind. Every hundred yards or so it appears to pause in its flight, and a thousand scintillating sparks burst from it in a shower of silver and gold. This is caused by the block passing over portions of the shoot where a number of long nails have been driven in close together to check its momentum by friction. As it reaches the bottom of the shoot the velocity of the mass appears fearful. Standing on the wharf, it whisks past like a flash, meets a broad iron-faced concave screen, up which it springs to a height of twenty feet, and falling back, subsides gently at the top of another little shoot leading on board the ship. Here a man grasps it with his great steel callipers, and without effort turns it end on, propelling the

slippery lump to the next incline, when away it goes again. So on and so on, it is at length slid into its place in the hold; but long before it is stowed another is at the bottom of the big shoot, followed by others, as many as six or seven being in sight at once, flying after one another as fast as they can be slipped out of the way at the bottom. So the work goes rapidly on until we are loaded. A ship carries herself quite full of ice stowed in such a way that it is a solid block inside her.

What wonderful "fence carpenters" the Norwegians are! I made the acquaintance of the master of the ice-house and his family. I was invited to spend every evening with them. Every household utensil that has not to be brought into direct contact with the fire is made of wood. My Norwegian vocabulary is limited, yet it sufficed with my hospitable entertainers. It was *only* what I had picked up from Norwegian sailors in English ships. It was enough to enable me to understand this illustrative story. I was expressing admiration of the skill with which one of the strapping

sons of the house was doing some Jack-knife joinering, when the old man told me how children were taught the use of the knife.

"Have you finished that spoon yet?" asks a father of his little son.

"Yes," says the son, and displays with pride a wooden spoon he has made with his *knife;* whereupon the father takes the spoon and attacks it with his *axe* by way of putting the finishing touches on it.

There were also two stalwart daughters of alarming *physique,* but with the prepossessing face sometimes accompanying Scandinavian blood and hard work. The elder was about twenty—as strong as a horse; but her sister—about two years younger, and not quite so robust—was the one under whose guidance I preferred to visit the striking natural beauties of the neighbourhood. The two girls and I foregathered, and gathered more than one wooden pailful of wild strawberries in the long summer evenings. The fruit was always sent on board the ship by them even when I would not take any with me.

I have often thought that an imperfect knowledge of the language and the fact of being a stranger, rather favour than stand in the way of freedom of intercourse with the fair. I was just beginning to settle down as a recognised member of the schnaps and singing evening parties at my Norwegian friends' house, when I had to bid an abrupt farewell to Marie, the only one of the names I remember, and off to sea again.

"'Twas not beneath the burgonet,
Nor yet beneath the crown;
'Twas not on couch of velvet,
Nor yet on bed of down:
'Twas beneath the spreading birch,
In the dell without a name,
Wi' a bonnie, bonnie lassie
When the kye comes hame."

As the Scotch song that used to be a great favourite with ladies some years ago, puts it.

Our return passage was all fair weather; the same summer skies and seas as on the passage out; the same inordinate devouring of fish. If life at sea was always as that voyage, I would blame no man for abandoning his natural element. The voyage was satisfactory to the owners and captain,

for I do not believe when we reached Lowestoft a pound of ice had been lost from melting. During the passage we had carefully kept the deck and sides of the ship thoroughly wet night and day.

The next voyage of the *Sparkling Foam* was to be to the West Indies. The captain urged me strongly to stay by the ship and go with him, but I had other fish to fry in London, of which he could know nothing, so was obliged to tell him I could not come, though it might have been better for me in the long run had I stuck to him. A better captain I could not have found. I paid off in Lowestoft, and even in a little fishing port like that, with only two months' pay, I met with damsels "That give a coasting welcome ere it comes." They and those worst of loafers that are the bane of the landed seaman, made an easy conquest of our sailors. I remained three days by the ship until the cargo was out, and three times we swept overboard at night half a ton of splinters of ice, a morsel of which a few days afterwards in London added sixpence to the price of my drink at the Monster.

CHAPTER VII.

Looking for Work on Shore—Hard up—A Hard Case—Work as a Dock Labourer.

I WAS on my feet again in town, but too late to do anything about New Guinea, for two expeditions had fitted out and started from Australia. In London, without an aim, or occupation, or object, for the third or fourth time, I simply had life to begin again at the age of twenty-eight. I had spent, as I have before said, three years in Edinburgh University studying medicine with very fair success, and every prospect of duly taking my degree. I would much have liked to return to the work, but I could not afford it, though to drop the sea I was determined. The end of two months saw the end of my money. From a pecunia to a picaune, there remained not a single coin current or otherwise in my possession. One of the most fixed conclusions I had arrived at, influenced principally by

casual glances at the columns of "Wanted" in the daily papers, was that there was work on shore in England for everybody who was willing to work, a great mistake I found. Also I discovered that so far as brain could be of service to me, the cranial capacity of the praying mantis would have met all the calls upon it, though the customary attitudes of that insect—somewhat difficult to acquire—together with the instincts attributed to it, might have been of some service.

My money had been spent less and less hopefully day by day in paying application fees, running about from place to place, and in writing letters, until this young gentleman of no occupation but looking for employment came to be of opinion that horse-dealers and card-sharpers were men above suspicion, as compared to publishers, theatrical agents, and all the recognised mediums through whom I sought to obtain work. I had been at first so certain of success that having recourse to friends or relatives for their assistance or influence had never occurred to me. Now that the prospect

begun to look gloomy the idea of doing so galled me. I was conscious of certain boastings about independence. My self-sufficiency had prevented my going about it in that way at first, and now I could not admit myself beaten.

An alteration in my system of living now became absolutely necessary. I might still subsist for some weeks on money derived from the sale of my personal effects. So after a day spent in looking for cheap lodgings, I succeeded in finding a snug little cabin in the pinnacle of a palatial building, near Russell Square, for fourteen shillings a week, fire, gas, and breakfast with a "relish" included. Oh, that relish! It was either jam made from some kind of pachydermatous wild plum, producing fourteen stones each, or a shrimped-up rasher that looked as if it had evaporated at sight of the fire all but a thin strip of rind, and another of rust, but there was always plenty of bread, and two cups of tea. My room was looked after, and my breakfast brought up by a poor little maid-of-all-work and no play, who to my certain knowledge took eleven

gentlemen's breakfasts, with or without relish, to eleven gentlemen's bedrooms before ten a.m. every day, and so far as I could make out did all the other work of that great community of furnished apartments. Poor little Sutica, I always addressed her by that classic feminine of Suticus. She never brought my breakfast up but I longed to take her by her scraggy little topknot, and plunge her red-hot smudgy little cheeks full fathom five into the cool, glittering washstand basin. I even pictured her bundled into a cab, driven down to the docks, walked over the gangway of a large ship, and handed over to the matron as I said, "Good-bye, Sooty; you'll find a saddle and bridle in one of your boxes. Write me from Queensland as soon as you can milk a cow." Down in the world as I was getting, I could still afford to be grateful that I was not born a lodging-house slavy.

I began writing my applications for situations more carefully and humbly. Also writing fewer of them, selecting only such places as I thought I stood the best chance of receiving a favourable answer from.

I often repeated to myself at this time a misquotation from "The Ticket-of-leave Man." "In the city there is a ladder, and in that ladder there is one step, and that step is at the top, one way or another you must reach that step."

That must be it, I thought. I had been trying to reach the top step at one bound, having previously taken the precaution of knocking out all the intervening steps as so many useless obstructions to my ascent, a method I believe not unusual among young men.

The first step, known as character for sobriety, I had permitted to remain, but after I had made a few ineffectual springs from it at the top one, I recklessly sent that flying after the others with such a crack that I do not feel sure I shall ever recover it. I soon became very miserable and hopeless, and quite satisfied that I was good for nothing. I took to frequenting public places of amusement, partly as a distraction, for it was in such place that I often met friends who might be in town, and I was sorely in want of companionship

at this time. I took to drinking, and sometimes drank a great deal more than was good for me. By the time I had been two months in London my time had come to be spent much in this manner. Awakened by Sutica, with the breakfast and relish, at 9 a.m; a very dull morning after a wet night in every sense. Not even the "relish" can tempt me to eat, so I fill my pipe, pour out a cup of tea, and seat myself in the rickety knobbly old arm-chair, whose every disquieting creak threatens imminent dissolution. In the meantime the poor patient little drudge sets to work to light the obstinate smoky fire, and polish a grate that never was meant to be polished. By the time Sutica succeeds in coaxing up fire enough to burn a letter I feel better, and in about as admirable a mood for going over an unsatisfactory correspondence as I could well be in. There are some four letters in answer to some thirty of mine. One from a legal gentleman at the instance of a gun-maker. One from the manager of the Recent Incission Comedy Company: "At present vacancies all filled up, but

name will be remembered should any further engagements be purposed." I burn that too, for I have learnt that in such a case a name made a note of is a name forgotten.

Another bulky epistle from a Welsh doctor, that opens in a way that would have sent a thrill of success all over me three weeks before; but now I composedly read the thing through from beginning to end.

"DEAR SIR,

"Your application, in answer to advertisement for an appointment as my unqualified assistant to hand. Your testimonials appear to be quite satisfactory. Your age is that which best suits me, and the situation. But before entering into a final engagement, I should be much obliged if you would answer a few questions. Your name is an Irish one, and supposing you to be one, what religious denomination do you claim? You may be a Roman Catholic, and being a Roman Catholic, what are your politics, or I may say, what are your

views with regard to Mr. Gladstone's earlier lines of policy in connection with Ireland? Your crest, I perceive, is a red herring rampant, the same as that of the clan Spratten, in Scotland. Now, as it is almost as certain that Scotland was peopled from the north-east of Ireland as it is that Ireland was first colonized by the Welsh, do you pretend any claim to the throne of England? You say, *and I approve the fact, indeed,* that you are a total abstainer; but I should like to know whether you are so strongly *opposed to alcoholic stimulants* as to deny that there might be occasions when you would recommend their use in private practice? Most of my work is in a district extending twelve miles, from Latecall to Stillborn. It is a very hilly country, inhabited by a dense mining population. I employ eleven other assistants, and hold all the public emoluments of three parishes. You may choose to attend patients at a distance either on the tricycle or bicycle, for we have one of each. Your salary will be one pound a week, you keeping yourself in lodgings near the dispensary, where you will be

expected to be in attendance from 9 a.m. to 11 p.m., supposing you to have returned from a night-call in time.

"I am, sir, yours truly,

"MICAH SCHIST, L.S.A."

I thought little of this when I received it, merely smiling a woeful smile, and putting it in my pocket as a curiosity to show one or two other men circumstanced much as I was myself. One of them afterwards answered this letter for me in this wise:

"MY DEAR OLD SCHISTY,

"God bless you! I would have answered you sooner, but have been *too* too *too* drunk. Neither you nor your situation suit me.

"S. NEUKS."

The letter which promises to be the best, I open last. It is from a wealthy lady, an English relative, to whom I had written, begging the loan of five pounds, and though candidly admitting that the question of repayment was extremely problematical, I had no reason to expect a refusal. I shake the

sheets well open, but no enclosure falls out. I therefore begin to read, feeling in a disposition that prompts such comments as I shall here interpolate.

"MY DEAREST JOHN,

"I deeply regret that I cannot comply with your request. I had on the very day *your* unexpected *letter* came, sent off my annual donation of £50 to the C.C.A.S." (Cheeseparing Church-mouse Aid Society! I wouldn't thank you for the churchmouse's share.)

"It grieves me much *to hear* that you find yourself in such straitened circumstances; but, my dear John, have you taken to heart Ecclesiastes iii. 10-15, together with Job xxxviii. 28-41, and Habakkuk iii. 5-8, with verse 18? Do also turn to Proverbs xviii. 29-35, and St. Luke xxi. 34; then you must read Ezekiel xxxi. 16." (Is that all?)

"Now I may *tell you that* your cousins, L. O. P., W. J. F., and E. B. M., are in Town, as you no doubt are anxious to meet them. Miss C., who is staying with the W.'s, called here with them the other day,

and inquired very kindly after you and your whereabouts." (I wish to God I knew her whereabouts.)

"Next month, D.V."——

I have conscientious scruples which will not allow me to read more of this. I can put up with my friend being lightly referred to as "Miss C.," but I draw the line at that letter. I reflected, "Have at you with another for that." The same afternoon I sent a telegram to the writer of this letter from an office near her solicitor's in a forged name:

"Be sure to call on our old friend D. It is of the utmost importance."

I called again at the office, expecting a reply. It came, answer prepaid:

"Who is D.? Please let me know at once."

I felt I had done my duty in thus exemplifying impious feminine frivolity in one whose years had led me to expect a tone of reverence. Having recorded my protest, I would have been contented to rest; but it cost me nothing, so I wired back:

"That's an easy one; try another."

I then definately closed the correspondence on my side by dropping out of it.

Was there ever a detrimental fairly launched into Bohemia, or sprig of a family tree cast off as superfluous to take root among the underwood or to rot there, that did not attempt to fasten a few rootlets in the soil of literature? Even before my fall, I had, I thought, made my mark in that line; for had I not written an article for the *Caledonian* on Pushtoo and the dialects of Afghanistan at a time when some tribal revolts in that Arcadia of India were exciting a good deal of public interest? That the reader may not experience any uncertainty about the date of these events, I may mention there was also at this time a crisis in Constantinople, and cholera in Lower Bengal. I had been made very vain by that article. I had heard an authority state his belief that the incomprehensible rigmarole must have been written by an erudite lunatic devoting his life to digging for Sanscrit roots in the "Encyclopædia Britannica," and I felt flattered. To this day I take some pride in showing my

unanswerable queries sent to *Notes and Queries*, in old numbers of some of the best sporting papers of the day.

On coming to London, I had obtained introductions to the editors of the *Transitory*, and other papers, from a fellow-townsman, a *littérateur* of some note, at the bar of the Monster, where both editors and friends were to be met daily at a certain hour. An editor had told me to be sure and send him anything I had, as he would certainly use it. So looking over the morning paper—not forgetting the advertisements—I find a batch of letters from indignant citizens, demanding to know how much longer Oxford Street and the Strand are to be kept "up," and in an impassable stage of repair. Upon this I write a funny sarcastic letter to the editor of the *Transitory*, exonerating the municipal authorities, who have *not left a stone unturned*, and showing that the public complain *groundlessly*. I am tempted to accompany it with a private pitiful request to insert it and pay for it soon, telling the editor that I am lodging in a coal-cellar, clothed in

a wet sack, and strongly tempted to eat one end of my farthing dip while I burn the other to light me in my literary convulsions, and how my most joyous laugh is often mistaken by my creditors for my death-rattle; but instead, I chose the economical plan of writing it small on "one side" of a post-card. After-experience has taught me that it stood as good a chance of being accepted in that way as in any.

Before I went out in the morning there was the wardrobe to be looked over, and some article doomed for current expenses—a dress-coat or a ring—let us suppose the ring. I had had reasons of sentiment for keeping that ring so long; I had been very loath to part with it, but the time had come for it to go. I pull it off my finger with a tug that seems to reach in its effects some place about the bottom of my chest, wrap it carefully up in a bit of paper—nice blue tissue-paper—with something like a sigh, and off down the five flights of stairs out into the cheerless windy squares, where there is scarcely a pedestrian to be seen, when three minutes' walk brings me into all the buzz and whirl of High

Holborn. A few doors up a by-street is the pawnbroker's. I walk boldly in, for I have by this time overcome any shyness or apprehension of being noticed at a queer job. Inside the attendant knows me, and nods pleasantly, doing business promptly. It cost me an extra pang to see the man take the bright little jewel in his dirty paws, and drop some kind of vile acid on it; but in two minutes I emerge with a sovereign and some silver in my pocket, together with a small card, which, I cherish the belief, will enable me to recover the memento at some future day. Never! for one pledge of that kind that is redeemed, ninety and nine are lost. It takes a three of Irish hot to make me feel "fit" and equal to that most discouraging, dispiriting part of the day's employment, calling at employment agencies.

The landlady also on this day sternly *borrowed* the latch-key to *lend* to a new lodger, on the principle known to sailors as "Get up, Jack; let John sit down, for you know he's homeward bound." Somehow I never mustered up courage to ask her

to return me that latch-key. At last there came a day when the week's bill fell due, and there was no money forthcoming to meet it. Payment must be postponed until next week, I tell my landlady, with the shallowest affectation of cheerfulness to cover the most hopeless and desperate frame of mind.

Another week, and no money for the landlady; that incubus rent weighs on my racked, scheming brains until I am actually worried into a fever by it. As the day approaches, I even meditate lurking behind a turn of the stairs and braining my landlady with the tongs as she comes up with the bill. When at last I had to face her, and tell her that I had no money yet, and beg for a little more grace, she was not so wroth as I expected.

On coming to think of it, my case was only that of hundreds of other lodgers in the same pinnacle within the good lady's experience; and probably she had learnt that men generally do pay in the long-run, getting aid when things come to the very worst from their friends. She only suggested to me a little economy; so the fire and "relish" were given up.

The washing didn't come home that week. The landlady said she could not understand why; we suspect that she was keeping it herself as some security. She has an odd manner if she should happen to meet me on the stairs—an air neither repellent nor pleasant, but which distinctly says: "The relations between us are strained, sir."

For some days shabby clothes had kept me from visiting several places where I was known, and now soiled linen keeps me in the house the greater part of the day, seldom going out till after dark. How hope of work ashore could still linger in a spirit so crushed as mine was at this time seems unaccountable to me now. But I still clung desperately to every straw; dozens of my letters still remained unanswered; something might turn up any day. I applied for the post of conductor on a tram-car, but found I must deposit five pounds. I went to the Westminster rendezvous and tried to enlist as a soldier; but I had lost about a quarter of an inch of my chest-measurement, and found that the Queen considered me so much too small for stopping

bullets. There seemed nothing for it but to go a few yards farther and jump off Westminster Bridge.

I often stayed out in the evening very late. I had no latch-key, and felt a delicacy about knocking my landlady up to let me in. She always made a point of opening the door herself after eleven o'clock. On such an occasion, after the public-houses closed, I would often wander about London until daylight. Sometimes, under the shelter of a hot night coffee-stand, I would meet a fellow-sufferer, and hear a thrilling history of misfortune and misery that made the night hours speed along by its intense interest. In the middle watches of the night in London, solitary wayfarers meeting exchange greetings just as they would were they to meet on some great waste half a day's journey from a habitation. Even the policeman, who stands his lonely watch night after night, seeks the trifling companionship with a fellow-creature which a passing "Fine night," or "Wet night," affords.

I sometimes spent hours in the heart of the

great City. Outside its bounds the streets are wider, more open to the sky and wind, and the hum of London is never entirely hushed. Eastward, Whitechapel contributes its rumble of market-bound wheels in the stillest hours. Northward, the restless steam traffic of railways, if subdued, still sends its buzz and throb through the air. Westward, Covent Garden is noisily awake in the darkest hour before the dawning. Southward, the river rolls darkly by, muttering and growling through the bridges on its way, to the hoarse hails and clanking chains of the ever-wakeful shipping.

But once in the middle watch pass that grand façade westward of that enormous pile, the City of London, and there, at the very fountain-head from which but a few hours before issued the all-pervading murmur of London, we find the silence of the tomb. Amidst those gloomy, silent avenues, the City impresses a unity upon one as no great edifice, in spite of marvellous symmetry of proportions, ever did. There is light enough; we would have no more. There is mystery among the

shadows; the shade is congenial to our humour. The inky glinting pavement of asphalt might be the porphyry floor of an enchanted palace. Above, on either hand, rises story upon story of beautiful architecture, until high up overhead we view a narrow strip of starlit sky, an illuminated dome. We are an intruder overawed in such a temple the like of which the world has never seen, erected to what God we know; but what offerings it contains, what sacrifices are made, we may try again and again to realize, but in vain. No wonder we are thrilled with awe. In the distance the echoing clang of the policeman's tread, as he paces slowly up one of the sombre aisles towards us, in no way dissipates our reverie. He is one of the dark brotherhood, midnight guardians of the mysteries and treasures of the omnipotent Mammon. A bicycle fanatic glides swiftly and silently by—a phantom, a votary, a mystery in unison, but hardly noted in our mood. Clatter! whistle! whoop! clash! and three maniac barbarians on roller-skates charge with a whirr and a halloa out of

Lombard Street. They pass the statuesque figure of the night guardian, and he has not withered them with a glance or turned them into waste blotting-paper with a wave of his baton. Straight at us they rush, shouting in boisterous mirth, and whirl past deeper into the, until this instant weird City, and we have not slain them on the threshold. The spell is broken, and we are reminded of the time of day, which is about three in the morning, so that we are just in time to meet with another who haunts the City by night.

A figure comes sauntering slowly down Cheapside, and stands opposite the Mansion House. He was a man about thirty years of age, much above the medium in height, showing a wasted but well-proportioned form—a form which, though now bent and feeble, had no doubt but a short time before been as erect as any. He was most shabbily dressed, from his ragged worn-out shoes to his battered, one time hard-felt hat—his frayed and soiled gray-tweed suit one continuation of ill-mended rents. His wan, dejected countenance lit

up a little as he espied me emerging from the shadow of the Royal Exchange. There was even a sweetness in the smile on his mild, pale features as we met, and he said, "I was afraid I was not going to see you to-night." No shaking of hands or other form of greeting is customary between men situated as we are. I have spent a few hours with him before, and he has confided his whole history to me. To-night we have met again by appointment at three a.m. somewhere in the City, knowing that we stood a better chance of doing so by this arrangement than if we had made the gateway of Cannon Street Station our tryst at three p.m.

I take his arm and move off. "I knew I should see you sliding along this way before long on no visible means of support," I say, and glance with a pleasant laugh at my companion's attenuated lower limbs. We then set off slowly westward in easy converse. Who on earth have I picked up now? A gentleman and a scholar. This seedy man's story may be told. His parents had died when he was a very young child, leaving in trust for him

sufficient means to give him a good education, first in one of the best public schools and then at a university, after which there should have been enough to provide him with two hundred a year for the rest of his life.

He had not been very bright at school, nor distinguished himself in any way at the university, merely taking his degree in the ordinary course after the usual term of residence. He had then entered upon commercial pursuits, so far as accepting a seat at a desk in a City office could be so described, where he was worked hard at a nominal salary, upon the understanding that when he should have the management of it himself at twenty-five, he would invest the whole of his capital in the concern. For three years he plodded contentedly on. He had his occupations, his recreations, even his friendships, his loves, his moderate ambitions, all in due form, as a promising everyday young man ought to. When the time came for him to assume the control of his own money, there had been nothing to control. His one surviving trustee,

an uncle, his nearest and almost only relative, had by a perfectly legal process obtained possession of and squandered or pocketed every penny of the trust-money, taking great pains, when he came to be called upon for it, to prove the equity of the act, which left his trust thus suddenly penniless. Assuming the part of the aggrieved, his uncle cast off his nephew and ward as an ingrate, unworthy of consideration or assistance. After this there crowded upon him the train of evils that are always said to follow a first misfortune—loss of situation, physical privations, mental suffering to a brain at no time very strong, followed by a serious illness. He was in hospital for weeks, and then departed from it to absolute destitution, homeless, and more friendless in the thick of the great human swarm of London than if he had been a lonely castaway in some part of the world only to be located as lat. —, long. —. Now that we meet him, he has been starving for weeks.

By the side of my companion's trials, my troubles appear light to me. I can even look upon myself

as a hale, hearty young man, undergoing a little salutary hardship. I am even able to offer a trifle of assistance to a more needy man. On the night of my first acquaintance, I had given this man a shirt; and to-night kept a few coppers to provide a large cup of coffee and some slices of bread and butter at a night coffee-stall at the west-end of Oxford Street, for which we are now making.

How my companion has supported life for the last six weeks may be gathered from his present conversation. He tells his painful doings all as a matter of course. He does not appear to have intelligence or sensitiveness enough to realize his desperate situation; or perhaps it all appears to him as a frightful unreality happening to such a changed creature that he really does not recognise his true self as the sufferer. This we know to be a possible condition of mind. He is too weak to drink, even. Often a proud sensitive temperament impels a man labouring under a burden of shame and disgrace to avail himself of that extremely plausible and thoroughly sufficient explanation of

his painful condition, drink. It is a failing often so leniently regarded that it seldom alienates a friend, while the ill-disposed should feel grateful to the client who affords them such a very popular justification for kicking him when he is down, and for sparing them apologies to their friends. Myself, I do not, under any circumstances, require a stimulant. Providence mercifully ordained that I should be born with rather more than a glass of whisky already in my head. My companion recalls with delight how that night a fortnight past he had found a shilling, a sixpence, and a halfpenny on the steps of the Lyceum, and what comfort it brought him. How for two consecutive nights he slept in a bed in a large fourpenny lodging-house, where they allowed lodgers to stop all day in a kitchen below, where cooking could be done at two great roasting fires. How he took a threepenny bath at the Marylebone public baths, and invested the remaining coppers in halfpennyworths of fried fish, bread, and milk, so judiciously, that for three whole days

he felt no pressing want of food. He tells how an old woman, who keeps a fried-fish shop near the docks, and who drives a roaring trade during the labourers' dinner-hour, had once run short of paper to wrap up the little pieces of fish as she handed them out, and how he, making a purchase at the moment, fortunately held an old newspaper in his hand, which he proffered the good woman in her difficulty. She thanked him, and refused to take payment for the piece of fish he was buying, telling him at the same time that she would be glad to give him as much as he could eat any day he could bring her half a dozen newspapers. Now, one of this waif's most profitable employments is searching eagerly about for castaway newspapers, on public seats, in railway stations, public parks and gardens, or in the streets, with more or less success. He carries a piece of soap, and a large handkerchief, with which to wash himself at some public drinking-fountain early in the morning before the streets become peopled; and he tells me how one bleak, chilly morning he was so engaged, when a police-

man stepped over from the corner of the street, and asked him:

"Have you been out all night?"

"I have," said he. Whereupon Bobby thrust his great fist into his pocket, and drew therefrom twopence, and, pressing it upon him, stalked off without giving the recipient time to express his gratitude.

When we arrived at the night coffee-stall, I ordered two pints, and two plates of bread-and-butter, excusing myself by telling him that I had been drinking, and forcing it on my starving companion. It is the best thing about the animal man that he derives gratification from giving pleasure.

Notwithstanding his hunger, he at first refused it, trying to make me take my share. He knew I was hard up, and thought that I might be really more hard up than I said I was. It did me, however, more good than a supper at Scot's, to see the way the poor wretch devoured the substantial halfpenny slices of bread-and-butter, and the way he enjoyed four halfpenny cups of hot coffee. The last crumb

devoured, and the last cup of coffee swallowed—was it the hot coffee that had brought tears into his eyes? and was the bread too dry, that he still appeared to be trying hard to swallow something? I didn't inquire; I only said:

"Well, old fellow, it's getting daylight, and I must be going home, or my landlady will be up, and I shall have to face her. Sutica lets me in, you know, when she cleans the front steps. By-the-bye, what did you say you could get a bed for? Fourpence, wasn't it? Well, look here—I've just got fourpence left; you take that."

He hesitated, and said I must want it myself. Men so situated are very candid. But I pressed it into his hand: "It's no earthly use to me; I should only spend it in drink as soon as the pubs are open." He tried to speak his gratitude but I did not give him time before I rattled on:

"I'll meet you in the City to-night again. Off you go. Good-bye;" and I started off myself. As I went home, I thought, "What will become of the poor helpless beggar? He can't go to sea, as I can!"

I lingered on for some weeks in the way I have been describing, sometimes making a little money by writing. I have to thank the press for many a meal when I might but for it have gone to bed hungry. It is, perhaps, the only calling holding out prospects of advancement to a higher position which is open to everybody. To enter it, there is no ring to be propitiated; specimens of work are all the introductions asked for; promotion goes by merit alone. Even seniority, unless accompanied by ability, is but a secondary recommendation. A man must be very sure of his gifts who takes to literature in the hope of making a success, or even as a mere means of obtaining a livelihood; for, though there is no bar to initiation, there is but one key to the higher mysteries of the craft, and that is proven worth. It did not take me long to learn that I need never hope to make my pen my legs, though it might do for a crutch.

A week came during which not a line of my copy was set up anywhere, and the long-impending crisis had come; my long-suffering landlady gave out.

Bless the good woman! I have since looked for her, and find her account has been settled, for she is dead, and let us hope has her reward. Before bidding her good-bye I realized a few shillings on some books that nothing but the last pinch would have extracted from me, and went down to the docks to look for labouring work. In a public-house I got into conversation with some dock labourers, and had pointed out to me one of the gangers. A pot of beer was the only introduction requisite to make his acquaintance, after which a few more drinks gained me a promise of work on the next day. I was at the place according to appointment, and received a small ticket, my authority for wheeling a hand-truck, with a bale of cotton on it, for eight or nine hours a day at fivepence an hour.

After the first couple of days had taken the stiffness out of my muscles, I found the work little more than healthy exercise, and the pay sufficient to live upon. I might have been wheeling a truck in the London docks yet, but that one night, after I had been at work every day for a fortnight, I failed to turn up at the public-house frequented by the

ganger, and where I had been in the habit of paying for a drink for him every night. Next day, when I went for my ticket as usual, I was passed over among the crowd of applicants, and received no ticket. The tin-kettle gave a tremendous bump that frightened me off on a run half round the world. It is true, I might have been reinstated at the handles of the truck had I repaired to the public-house and solicited the favour and influence of the ganger; but my constitutional nomadic twist made me, as usual at the flood-tide of my affairs, reprehensibly blind to my own interest. It would be vain and trivial for me to seek to defend my conduct in thus wilfully and recklessly abandoning the secure and easy circumstances of a dock labourer with every necessary of existence procurable. I fear I must plead guilty of wicked discontent with my position. My gratitude for the beneficent ordering of the world does not gush and well adequately, even when I reflect that there are adjacent globes in which the conditions required for the support of animal life do not exist at all.

CHAPTER VIII.

Looking for a Ship—A good Blue-noser—New York—Shanghai'd—Ocean Cadgers.

I WENT to work the day after I lost my job to look for a ship. My intention was to return to the whaling, the only sea service now worth following up. I was not at all particular what sort of ship I got into, as long as it was going to any part of the United States, from which I could work my way down east to one of the whaling ports. I experienced all the usual difficulties of an Englishman in getting a ship. After a fortnight, during which I had received an offer from a captain who knew me to go to the East Indies, I at last got a chance. I saw a little crowd of men gathered round an old Jew, in a high hat, on Tower Hill. I knew the old Jew to be a man who kept a slop-shop, and found

crews for American ships, and so, thinking he might be able to give me a chance to the Westward, I pushed into the crowd and said:

"Mr. ———, you may as well take my discharges."

The old fellow looked at my certificates, took my measure, and said:

"You don't want to go to the Westward in a Blue-noser?"

My last was a second-mate's discharge, and it was very hard for him to believe that a good sailor, apparently not in the last stages of destitution, could be doing anything but having a joke when he volunteered for such employment. I answered him positively:

"Square, boss; I do. You just take my discharge, that's all."

The old man looked at me keenly for a moment. I bore his scrutiny in a way that seemed to satisfy him, for he said:

"Five shillings for the chance?"

I nodded acquiescence, and the old man pocketed

my discharge. He then turned to the cluster of men round him, and said:

"I've got all the men I want now. You that's hungry keep with me, and I want all the rest of you to be at the Crooked Billet in an hour."

I watched the string of men go off with the old Jew. They were all hungry, it seemed; most of them very young men. One or two were worn-out old hands. They all bore unmistakable signs of having lodged in the streets and boarded in the market for many days. Not one of them that would stand a spook of a chance of being picked by a captain, or that would not, indeed, have been rejected at sight by any of the authorized shippers.* Yet these men must live, and are willing to work. For one seaman that has been helped and raised above the lowest depths of poverty and misfortune by the organized charities and benevolent proselytizers who parade so much and effect so little, a thousand have been taken up—fed, clothed, and provided with work—by the so-called crimps, un-

* Shipping-agents.

authorized shipping-agents and hard-up boarding-houses. It is only at the other end, the pay-table, that the nefarious part of the boarding-masters' trade in England comes in. Ships are hard enough for Englishmen to find in England without making legislation to prevent anyone but an agent of a German barrack, like the Sailor's Home, bespeaking the first right of providing a crew for a ship. Poor Jack is a dumb animal; he cannot speak for himself. I think I may say one thing for him, though. He does not want perverting to a sneaking pet of Bethel harpies. His life, which is spent at sea, all except a week or so in the year, is almost one of enforced blamelessness. If the warm-hearted, sympathizing English people who now support an army of mission sharps in our seaports would refer to me, I think I could direct their generosity into channels more compatible with the precepts of the Master. I am sometimes before and sometimes behind the scenes, which puts me very much "in the know," to use an expressive slang phrase.

The crowd of ragged men who had gone away

with the old Jew to some hard-up boarding-house for a meal, came back at the time appointed, and I met them opposite the Crooked Billet in the Minories. The old Jew went into the house, and shortly came out with the captain. The captain was a tall, determined-looking man, turning out, as I judged him then to be, a shrewd, slim, money-making Nova Scotia man. It was understood that the old Jew paid the captain five shillings for each man engaged on his recommendation, the Jew trusting to recoup himself out of the advance-notes which he would cash.

"These are the men, captain," said the Jew, handing the captain three discharges, and a list of the names of the rest who had no discharges.

The captain called over the names, pausing to give one sharp glance over each man as he answered. When he came to me he looked a little longer at me than any of the others, probably thinking I looked too respectable to be shipping in his ship; but he said nothing, perhaps concluding I had never been in a Nova Scotiaman before, and was

ignorant of exactly where I was going. As soon as the names were called, the captain said:

"You all want to go in the ship, men?"

One or two answered him "Yes," after which he led the way to the shipping office. The process of signing the articles was soon over. We signed for ten shillings less than the wages going at the time. But it must be remembered that all the men were in desperate circumstances; most of them would have been glad to go, naked as they were, for their food alone. As it was, they got a note for one month's advance at two pounds ten, in exchange for which the old Jew gave them each two shillings cash, a bag containing two changes of under-clothing, a suit of oilskins, knife, and mess-traps—probably not more than a pound's worth intrinsically; but as things were with those men it meant simply life.

I did not go to the slop-shop with my note—not disappointing the Jew, for I do not think he expected me. He only took me in order to put a little leaven of seamanship into his nondescript muster, of most of whose seamanship he may well

have been a little doubtful. Shipping-agents in collecting a crew like to get one or two good seamen among them, to encourage the captain to come again to them for a crew. We were to be on board next morning. The preparing of my sea-chest and stock of sundries, and getting them and myself on board at the right time, I left entirely to my host of the Trafalgar, an operation he faithfully performs for sailors every day. He was very much surprised and disgusted when I told him I had shipped before the mast in a Blue-noser to the Westward; but he roused me out at three a.m. and bundled me down to the docks in a cab.

The vessel lay in the Shadwell Basin not half a mile off. She was a large ship, about 1,500 tons register. She was not different from the rest of those great, clumsy timber rafts. The very outlandish woods that go to make them up remind one of the Ark—locust, hickory, hemlock, hackmatack, spruce, are among the commonest. I would not put my foot on board one for more than a passage on any account.

The men were all down in time, looking a good deal better, in clean working clothes, after two or three good meals and a night in bed. One advantage of shipping "hard-ups" in home ports is that they are pretty certain to come aboard sober, and have no friends to see them off or detain them in neighbouring public-houses until the ship has hauled out and they miss their passage. As soon as they got a little good American hash into them, they turned out as smart a crowd of young fellows as I ever wish to see in a ship's forecastle. Some of them were a little insubordinate at first, but they had North American mates to deal with, and soon found it out, after which all went smoothly, for there is no harder worker or better sailor than the over-bold Englishman; he is so deliberate that what appears a rash act in him is really a premeditated one. Once he admits his master, there is no more trouble with him. The couple of old men we had were good enough, for, like the young fellows, they were very sensitive, and afraid of seeming deficient in ability. One landsman had

managed to smuggle himself in. He had been a corporal of Dragoons, and had only deserted from the regiment four days when the old Jew picked him up. He was a fine, able young fellow. He was found out in an amusing way. We had just hauled out of the dock, when the mate seeing him standing near the main-rigging, said:

"Hey, you go up on the mainyard, and send that strop and block down," pointing aloft to a girt-line that had been put on the mainyard to land the gangway.

The man looked up where the mate pointed, and though he did not understand a word of the order, or gather that he was to go upon the mainyard, he looked for a minute until the mate said hastily:

"Come, now; move yourself."

The Dragoon turned round to the mate, and said simply:

"Do them steps go right up to the top?"

The mate thought the man was drunk or trying to be witty, and was walking towards him to knock him down, when the man said:

"Do you want me to go up there?"

The mate then, for the first time, perceived the man was not a sailor, and therefore said:

"Wa'al, I guess I do want you to go up there."

"Do you think I'm mad?" said the fellow.

There was no mistaking the evident sincerity of the man's astonishment at being asked to do such a thing. The unconscious audacity of this completely disarmed the mate; he had to go away laughing.

There was one other man among the crowd that came in for a share of my attention. He was the only other man besides myself who looked in any way decently clothed at the shipping-office. He was a good sailor, but I suspected him of being a Dutchman or a Dane. I caught the convicting roll in his *r* once in a while, when he was talking rapidly. English ships have been so long overrun by foreigners, that there are now some of them who speak English so well that they may safely hail from Scotch or North-country ports, especially if they have acquired the language in sailing out of

ports where the local dialectic accent is strong enough to characterize the speech as they learn it; such accent serving to conceal and slur the foreign one, so that it is sometimes extremely difficult to detect it. The most knowing of these country-deniers hail from the Shetlands or Orkneys, which they may do without any chance of being found out; though a Dutchman, as soon as he can speak enough English to say, "To be course it are too short enough," claims an English town as his place of birth before the shipping-clerk.

More than half the foreigners sailing in English ships are registered as British-born subjects; a fact which it might not be going too far to ask the Registrar-General of British seamen to remember in his statistics. The one we had in this ship hailed from Lerwick, and may possibly have been a Shetlander, though I doubted it enough to feel a little resentful when I heard him very frequently nagging at the Dragoon. The Dragoon had a very rough time of it; he was, of course, as strange and cowed as if he had been thrown a prisoner among

the Soudanis; besides which, the life of wet, cold, and danger, so different from land hardship, always takes the spirit out of landsmen. The soldier was a countryman anyhow, and though one cannot feel much compassion for a useless man in a good man's place, when his share of work falls on yourself, still it went greatly against my grain to see the man I felt sure was a Dutchman bullying an Englishman.

One very fine day after the soldier was well over his sea-sickness, and the ship was not rolling an inch one way or the other, I took a Cockney sailor on one side, and said:

"Look here, that swaty is a wreyneck, I know; but that other bloke that gets on to him is a Dutchman."

"Now you say it, bli'me if I didn't think so," said the Cockney.

And then we made our plans as follows. We called the soldier, and I said:

"Chummy, that fellow that's down on you so in the forecastle is nothing but a Dutchman. Don't

you put up with it any longer; we'll see you right if you go for him."

The soldier did not require much encouragement—the memory of all his wrongs rose before him; and he straightway went for the Dutchman asking him, without any apparent cause at the moment, to come and hold out his sleeves on the forecastle-head there and then.

The mate heard them, and said:

"Go in and have it out; you'll be better friends after."

I could see the Dutchman was sick before he began; but he probably never was so sick before, and never will be again until he pegs out, as he was when that young soldier had had about three minutes at him. His perfect helplessness with his fists convinced me that he was not an Englishman. The young soldier simply laid him out at every clout, and we had to stand him on his feet again. We could see the soldier would kill him in two more minutes, and so put a stop to it. But the soldier's blood was up, and he said:

"Now, if there is anybody else has anything against me, I'm ready. I'll tie one hand behind my back, and fight any man in the ship from the captain down."

Everyone had seen enough to know that the challenger would be no mean antagonist even under those disadvantages, so nobody cared to take up his generous offer. The mate did seem to think he was going a little too far. So walking up to him, he said:

"Young fellow, you best be a little bit keerf'l I don't get me paws on you."

A look at the big mate's wicked eye cooled the soldier somewhat, and he thought he'd best not clash too much with the authorities. He said:

"I didn't mean you, sir," and backed out of his challenge generally, as he quieted down.

Some men, after an achievement like his, would have looked for other easy conquests, and become intolerable swaggerers; but this man did not. I was never sorry for having started him; he was

really a gentle, unassuming, willing man enough when not roused, and promised, if he continued to persevere at his work as he did with us, to become a useful enough man on board a ship. The vessel had had all summer cleaning-ship, so that there was not much dirty-work to be done in her; besides, the equinoctial gales were upon us, and sail-handing on the "branches" took all our time. Both captain, mate, and second-mate were as hard drivers as their countrymen always are; but we were all active young fellows, and few of us had clothing enough to make us want to stick aloft longer than we could help. No one was struck by an officer during the whole passage—no one ever gave occasion, that is the secret. As is often the case in some of the hardest-worked British North American ships, to give the devil his due, the food was of the best quality and the quantity unlimited. One horrid compound they all carry, a substitute for coffee, known as "Union Coffee," and said to be made from roasted beans, I cannot let off spontaneous invective that would do justice to it; but

I have been fortunate enough to come across this cutting from "The Proceedings of the North Atlantic Branch of the Royal Occult Science Society:"

"It occurs in tins as a hideous mud-coloured mass resembling burnt blanket; it has an odour like a singed nigger in a disused tanyard. Spectrum analysis shows ·99 restored prehistoric sea-boots, ·01 traces of all the elements. Boiled for a month in ten thousand parts of brackish water, it is administered to sailors with results such as warrant a belief in a great future for it as a rat poison."

By the time we reached New York a general good feeling existed fore and aft, a healthy pride in smartness, and respect for the skill in our officers, who took more than their share of our risk; which, could we all have been kept together, would undoubtedly have developed into a genuine liking, out of which that *esprit de corps* never seen in a ship's company nowadays would have grown in time. And this would have been effected merely

by the firm hands of resolute fair officers, on as reckless, half-savage—I freely admit they were so—a lot of young ruffians as could be got together, who, had they found themselves in a Board-of-Trade-officered official-log-book-hampered English ship, would have become mutinously unruly in a week. One of the very acutest perceptions in the ignorant man is that which enables him to recognise his master. It seems intuitive, closely akin to the animal's instinctive submission to man. In New York we hauled into the Atlantic basin. Before we went alongside, the mate came forward on the forecastle, and said:

"Now, all you men, I want to tell you I'm very well satisfied with you, and I don't want to run any of you" (this last was a hint to the soldier); "so if you'll take my advice, you'll have nothing to do with the runners, but just stay by the ship."

Even if he was not satisfied with us he might easily have given that advice, for the wages to Europe were thirty dollars at that time, and the ship was not likely to be more than ten days in

port. Now, I am no chicken, and yet a little game was put up on me in New York that would seem incredible had I not experienced it. My intention in coming here was to work my way in a coaster down east, to get a "plumpuddinger"—that is, a whaler—out of Province Town, where they are all small vessels that fish in the Atlantic, and are only away nine months. As soon as the ship is off Castle Garden, one or two boats come alongside with boarding-house runners, and begin to try to wile away the men. They generally have a bottle of whisky in their breast-pocket, and they will call a man round the corner of the deck-house to have a drink. If he succumbs to the first lure he is a "captured seaman." It is almost certain that he will follow in the wake of that bottle wherever it may lead. Other inducements they have: "Can you drive a cart, and write a good hand?" says the runner to a young fellow who has been proof to all other inducements. "Yes," says he. "You're just the man I want. I run for a poor old widow-woman that wants a smart young fellow to look

after a horse and cart, and keep her accounts." Another comes with a card, whereon is printed :

SEAMAN'S LODGING HOUSE,
BY
MR. SCHNIDERVELT.
ONE STREET.

A Navigation School on the Premises.

He happens to know that Mr. Schnidervelt's is the most disreputable house in the Fourth Ward, and is next door to the "Dead House" (name of a public), not ten yards from Branigan's bucket-shop; and is, on the whole, one of the drunkenest houses in York (I drop the *New*, after native usage). I, as I said before, am no chicken. I know the mast from the gun; but still, one boarding-house is as good as another to me. I have money in my digger's-belt, and I intend to do whatever boarding-house I get into. So I take a runner, and say to him :

"I suppose I have to take a house. Where do you run for ?"

"Mrs. Fairvelt, in Roosfield Street. You just turn up the ship and come along with me."

Now when I spoke to this man the ship was not properly moored, and the officers had more work for us to do before they would have sent us to dinner, or otherwise dismissed us from duty. But I knew that the officers were helpless before such a gang of those blackguards, and therefore, sheltering myself under the wing of the runners, I stepped on shore with my bag. It may be asked, Who are the all-potent runners who can with the utmost impunity defy a ship's mate on board his own ship? First and foremost, he must be a man who has never had his heart broken by a master. After which he is always a cowardly blusterer who is looking for his master—(in nine cases out of ten, in the long-run, he finds him in six inches of steel). His life is not all violets by a long chalk, though he generally depends on a shaven, close-cropped indication of stripping well, and pugilistic appearance, to carry him through; there are so many traditions of his bloody acts that every seaman

dreads him only less than he does the English Board of Trade. Oh that that wonderful system were honest, instead of being more corrupt in its authorized menial service than the York blackguards! I have in England given a man with a B.T. on his hat one shilling, and he has obtained for me three chances in ships, while better men were looking for the same chances just outside the door. In York it is a clearly understood game of bluff on both sides, and you are not surprised if you go to leeward.

Now on board this ship in Brooklyn I saw a young fellow, a compatriot, and I said, "Let him be as bad as the rest, that is the man I am going with;" and accordingly went with him to Mother Fairvelt's. We were lodged well—good beds and blankets, all clean. We were given two dollars on entering the house. In an American sailor's boarding-house there is always plenty to eat, lashings and leavings of delicious food. The very poorest people in America enjoy high living, food is so cheap. Drink is so dear that to an English-

man the prices at first seem prohibitive; but he unfortunately soon becomes accustomed to them, and finds the insidious foe too often his undoing. It is the chief agent employed by the boarding-master in disposing of his boarders to the best advantage to himself.

I intended to take a line of my own in getting a ship, which, I think, must have been suspected by the runners, for I experienced great difficulty in giving them the slip, and going to a distant part of the town where most of the coasting shipping masters reside. But I did manage to sign in a schooner bound for New London, the place I wished to go to. I then went home and paid up what board I owed, intending to take my things away next day. Three or four men in the house had signed in a Nova Scotiaman that day, and were making things pretty lively in our room. When I entered one of them was roaring:

"Oh, if you go to New York town, inquire for Larry Meagher;
He'll give you plenty whisky from his big five-gallon jar."

I wish I could reproduce the extraordinary croon

with its sharps and flats and false time; it, and the funny yet perfect rhyme, set me up with what Charles Lamb called a stud of nightmares.

Bottles of whisky were flying all round, and I was not at all averse to joining in the conviviality. Indeed, it would have been impossible to have slept in that room, with a grand carouse going on about you, and the certainty of a fight or two to wind up with. About four in the morning we all subsided on to our beds in our boots, or lay about the floor. When I woke up, the runners were rousing the men out who had to go away that morning. One of the runners carried a bottle with which to "liven" the boys up. I did not feel as fresh as I might have done, and the first thing I did was to make an instinctive grab at the bottle to freshen the nip. I knew that the people of the house were very wroth at my shipping myself without an advance, and having money to pay up; for, of course, I had only been brought there with the intention that I should be shipped after a few days for a large advance, all of which would go to

the house. I expected, at least, to come in for a good deal of threatening and abuse, but was surprised to meet the utmost civility from the boarding-master when I went down to breakfast.

The men were going in the *Reuben C. Henbane*, one of the most notoriously bad ships in the Western Ocean trade, and I pitied them from the bottom of my heart. The three men were having their accounts made up. This is the style. Boarding-master, talking very rapidly:

"You, Tom, you've got thirty-five dollars advance; you've been a week in the house, and there was five dollars you had, and five dollars you had to have, and five dollars for shipping; and there's matches and tobacco in your bag. Oilskins you don't want, white slippers you must have. Bill's got a suit, and the mate won't want two good men in one watch. I've been round the Horn myself. That makes thirty-five. Is that right? There you are; there's your account quicker than Jerry wrote the note. Put your dhoby mark to that, and I'll give you a bottle to take with you."

Two distinguished representatives of the dangerous criminal classes are standing behind the poor man to see that he does put his "dhoby mark" on the back of the advance-note, so endorsing it as having been cashed to him for its full value by the boarding-house keeper. The real fact of the case is, that he has been a week in the house, which at a dollar a day means seven dollars really due to the house. The five dollars he is said to have had were represented by two dollars given him the day he entered the house, and ten cents every morning to put in his pocket for the day; altogether, two dollars seventy cents. The five dollars he had to have, he never would have; and the five dollars for shipping is an illegal exaction, against which the most stringent laws are enacted without being able to affect its discontinuance. Oilskins and sea-boots he does want, but dare not ask for them; white slippers he has no use whatever for, but the boarding-house keeper has purchased a job-lot of the articles cheap, and so the men must take a pair worth thirty cents, valued two shillings and sixpence,

in part settlement of his account. Matches and tobacco cost one dollar, with, say, two dollars for drink consumed during the last twenty-four hours since signing in the ship; and in exchange for a thirty-five-dollar advance-note to be cashed by the ship's agent three days after she sails, Tom has received thirteen dollars ten cents—poor value!

When times were good, and advances were forty dollars, I have known a New York boarding-house put away 115 men in a week, not one of whom owed more than ten dollars. Of course the biter is bit sometimes. A great number of advance-notes are dishonoured when presented to the agents on account of the men deserting at the last moment after joining the ship, usually resulting from the opportunity given by a ship not sailing on the day appointed. Besides which, there are regular boarding-house bums, who will stop in a house as long as they can, until at length pushed to ship, they will run away and work the same little trick on another house.

I knew one man in England in receipt of an

army pension, paid quarterly. He had only worked three months at sea as a fireman in his life, and yet he managed to impose on boarding-house keepers so completely, that for five years he had lived in the intervals of straitened circumstances between the receipt and squandering of his quarterly pension at various sailors' boarding-houses. Ned Waters, the hard-up boarding-master at Gravesend, pointed him out to me, and told me the man had been two months in his house before he discovered that a year before the same man had been ten weeks in his house, pretending to be looking for employment on board a ship, but really only lying low until his pension came due, when he went off on the spree. His is by no means an uncommon case. Mr. Waters, whose experience as a hard-up sailors' boarding-house keeper in Gravesend has extended over thirty years, informed me that about ten per cent of the men he took in were "dead-heads." His system has always been to take in all and every destitute man who came to him on the under-

standing that whether the man be three days or three months in the house he will give him one of his bags. Ned Waters's bags are a standing joke among sailors; though they do contain all that is absolutely necessary for a sailor to go on board a ship with, they look very small: but a man may owe his advance many times over before he gets a ship, and beggars cannot be choosers. But he may ship the very day Mr. Waters takes him in, as often enough happens. For hardly a tide but some ship tows down short of hands who have lost their passage by failing to join in time at the docks. I have known a tide when as many as twenty men were picked up at Gravesend by the ships passing outward.

The enterprising Sailors' Home a few years ago established a branch at Gravesend, having long recognised the profitable speculation, and now I believe that foreign competition, backed by the capital and highly organized system of the Sailors' Home, has rendered it as difficult a matter for a moneyless Englishman to get a ship in Gravesend

as in London. I am told that Mr. Waters has retired from the business as a man of some means, which for his sake I am glad to hear, for of a certainty seldom has a man been able to combine so much genuine benefaction to his fellows with profit to himself. But it will be a hard day for poor improvident English Jack ashore, as helpless as a fish out of water, when there is no hard-up house in Gravesend to which he can tramp when his last resources are exhausted in London.

"Hard-up houses" were a great boon, the sheet-anchor of many an old sailor, and should and would be encouraged by homeward-bound sailors, if the scandalous monopoly of touting, which Sailors' Homes enjoy by law, were in common justice withdrawn from them. All the support such places receive from English sailors is secured by touting at the dock-head. Mr. Waters told me that eighty per cent. of the men he took in walked down from London, or trudged into his place from even greater distances, certain of getting a ship of some sort there.

So much for sailors' boarding-houses in England. It is New York I am in now, however, and what befell me there must be told. As soon as the landlord had settled up with the three men going away (one of them was so drunk, a runner had to endorse his note for him, an act of forgery practised daily), he said to me:

"You're leaving too, Jack; you'd best go and have your bitters."

I was in no way loath, and so went into another room, where the runner took down a bottle. I noticed—what made me do so, I cannot guess—that the bottle, though quite full, was stopped with a long cork not belonging to it as it was sold. The runner poured me out a generous drink into a tumbler, and handed it to me. As I was drinking, he asked me if he should get my things up while the store-room was open. I told him he might, and went with him to point them out. As soon as I had brought them up, I felt tired, and thinking that I had not slept much the night before and it still wanted four hours to the time I had to be on

board the schooner in the south river, I lay down on a couch in the front room. I dreamt horribly. I thought I was witnessing executions, at which the principal performers appeared to be by far the least interested parties, jauntily touching up and adjusting the ropes round their necks with finger and thumb as one does a stand-up collar. Next I was in an open boat at sea among icebergs; we had just divided our last snowball, and all around us a most wonderful mirage. Before our longing eyes—there appeared visions of fried-fish shops, three stories high; processions of Bologna sausages filled the air, "unsubstantial pageants"! delusive visions of long-hoped-for land appeared on the distant horizon; America greeted our famished gaze in a whole block of "free lunch-bars."

No wonder I dreamt, for I must have had a parrot of a time of it while I slept. I was awakened by a thundering crash, and, opening my eyes, looked round the main-deck of a big ship. I staggered to my feet, and took in the situation in a confused, still dreaming sort of way. I tried to wake up, but

felt so sick and weak I fell up against the bulwarks —real, hard, substantial bulwarks I felt then. I knew it was a case of "dosed and Shanghai'd." I made a supreme effort to overcome my stupefaction. I managed to straighten up and look about. The ship was alongside the wharf; a number of people and a policeman were standing on the wharf looking at us. A ship's crew of men were standing or laying about me with their bags all strewn round the deck. Four or five were so drunk that they were being carried forward along the deck. I made a few unsteady steps towards the gangway leading ashore. I reached the foot of the ladder, when a man grabbed me by the shoulder and dashed me down on the deck. I made two or three attempts to rise, and called to the policeman on the wharf to take me on shore as I did not belong to the ship; but all the notice that was taken of me was a general laugh, and I received a number of kicks on the head from a man I recognised as the runner who had given me the last drink, by his voice, for every kick he gave me

he said, "Dry up, will you?" He must have kicked me senseless, for when I again came to a knowledge of my position, I was in a bunk in the forecastle. A man in the bunk below me, mad drunk, was singing:

"If you go to New York town, inquire for Larry Meagher;
He'll give you plenty whisky from his big five-gallon jar."

You needn't go to that trouble to get more than enough whisky in New York town, I thought; but I recognised the voice as one I had heard the night before, and knew the worst. I was "Shanghai'd" in the *Reuben C. Henbane.* I must have been brutally treated when I attempted to get on shore, for my eyes were black, my lips cut, and my head all over cuts and bruises. Whatever the drug was that had been given me, it must have been a very dangerous dose, for it was a week before I overcame the effects of it. Narcotic poisoning and concussion of the brain—not bad to begin with, and nothing extra to pay. I was not quite as well off as "somebody's darling" yet, "wounded by bayonet, shot, and

shell," if I remember the notes of the case, as given in the poem.

The ship was under-weigh when I woke up in the bunk, and I knew I could only make the best of a bad job, and cheerfully accept the *fait accompli*. My only dread at the moment was that as there were five other men laid up in their bunks, the officers might come in to drive us on deck; and I felt so sick, I thought if driven on deck or made to move about it would kill me. As the time wore on I heard the steamer let us go, and the sail made on the ship. After dark I felt from her motion that she was out of the river, and yet no one came to us in the forecastle. About eight o'clock all hands came below to supper, and one old man came to my bunk and asked me how I felt.

"Awful bad," I said.

"You was awful full when you come aboard."

"Dosed!" I answered.

"Likely!"

The old sailor brought me a panikin of tea to my bunk, and I sipped a little of it; but my cut lip

soon made me put it down. After supper the mate came to the forecastle door, and called all hands out to pick watches, saying, "I'll have all those loafers out that make out to be too drunk to work, or I'll know why." I turned out, but I was sick, and went aft. The names were called over by the mate; it was found he had the right number of men, but not half of them seemed to know the names they were under, most of them having been personated at the British Consular shipping-office by anybody whom the runners could get to go through the form of signing the agreement. It appeared that all along I had been detailed for this ship without my having any choice in the matter, and that one signing himself Barney Murtagh had represented me before the captain and Consul's clerk, and Barney Murtagh, unconsulted, I must remain to the captain, while in the ship. Not to mince matters at all, this was the worst ship I ever was in, and the crew was the most outrageously incompetent I ever sailed with. From the captain down there was but one man in the ship, old Mike,

I would have trusted to cross a dock in a jolly-boat.

The poison that had been administered to me had affected me most seriously. Now at eight o'clock, eleven hours after I had taken it, I was more dead than alive. I had to take the first look-out. In my then condition, instead of being on a ship's forecastle-head taking the responsible duties of a look-out, I should have been tied down on a bed and closely watched, for I was undergoing an experience of what delirium tremens must be like. I might have hung myself at the boom-end by the jib-downhaul, or jumped over the side. I dozed stupidly most of the time. Sometimes I would remember where I was, and then a burst of rage and disappointment would come upon me as I thought how nearly my own plans had been accomplished, and what a mess I had allowed myself to get into. Then the madness in which I might have done any frantic act would wear off from sheer feebleness, and I would try to do my duty on my post. But I saw lights all over, more lights

ahead on the water than ever shone in the heavens. If I fancied one was dangerously near and tried to report it, I couldn't speak; or if I did, "A bright light point and a half on the weather-bow," would only be heard as "A pint of four-half on the weather-bow;" or I would call for "A pint and quarter of port," or if that was not right, "A quart of porter." It was providential that we had fine weather for the first few days. Half-a-dozen of the other men were nearly as bad as I was. When it came to going aloft, I felt as I had never felt before, not even as a child of twelve, when I found myself for the first time on a royal-yard in a hard squall. My nerves were simply shattered; before I reached the futtock shrouds; my head swam; I thought I should faint if I looked down, and had to embrace the shrouds with both arms to prevent me from toppling headlong to the deck.

I learnt to appreciate the feelings of the man who said to his friend:

"Is that a cat on the wall?"

"Yes; of course it is."

"Thank God for that."

I must have been pretty much in the state of the other man who was called on by two friends with a rat each in their pockets. After a time one of the visitors let a rat go, which ran over the poor man's feet, and scurried about the room a minute before it escaped from sight.

"Oh my God!" cried the poor fellow, his eyes starting out of his head with terror; "there's a rat, a rat! look at it, look at it! There it goes! O Lord, it's gone!"

"Nonsense, old fellow!" said his friend, soothing him. "There's nothing of the sort in the room."

Without much difficulty, they persuaded him he must have imagined it, and then let another rat go.

"Look there! can't you see that rat there!—there! Oh, this is awful!" groaned the poor fellow, and lay back in his chair with his eyes closed. After some minutes of silence, he looked up with an imbecile beam of cunning and said: "I say, you fellows, I was only joking. I didn't see any rats."

For three or four days, if I didn't see rats every time I turned into my bunk to try and sleep, I was haunted by visions of B-flats as big as crabs, and huge spiders weaving webs around me as strong as whale-line, that, do what I might, I thought I should never be able to break through. For more than a week I was more helpless than the veriest ploughboy on board that ship, and was treated by the mates as a landsman who had never been to sea before. Do all that I could, the name never left me while I was in the ship. My bad reputation was made, and I was never able to assert myself to the last. Even after I had quite recovered my health, suppression and contemptuous treatment made me sullen and careless in everything I did—pig-headed and obstinate. There was only one other sailor in the forecastle, and he was a very old man. Old Mike we called him. The rest were all landsmen and boys, some of whom had never been at sea at all. Such talk I never heard in a ship's forecastle as theirs. A pawnbroker's assistant, an Italian organ-grinder, and an

expelled Jesuit, with old Mike and I, made up our watch. They called the deck overhead "the ceiling," and the deck they stood on "the floor;" they talked about "steering the wheel," "going out of doors," and "up the ladders;" when they spoke of "putting up the sails" and "taking them down again," then old Mike and I couldn't stand it any longer—we used to go on deck, and leave them the forecastle to themselves until they fell asleep. In the watch on deck we used to be driven and flogged round the deck like a gang of Chilian convicts, curses and blows going the whole time. We never did a single thing connected with working the ship without making a mess of it, and yet we somehow or other drove down upon the broadside of Europe in the winter-time, with everything ataunt. My bag had been put on board with me; but when I came to open it I found that some one had been through it, and removed all my good clothes, replacing them with rags and old boots. I forgive them, for they had put two pounds of tobacco in it, and two dozen of matches; had it

not been for that, I seriously believe I should not have been here to tell the tale. The clothes I stood up in were all I had; no bedding, and no oilskins. A leaky forecastle—to obtain some idea of which, see a detailed account of how the waters come down at Lodore. The clothes I had were good woollen clothes that would last me a long time. By stuffing paper into the cracks of the boards in my bunk, I kept the draughts from coming up under me, so that after I turned in, always all standing like a trooper's horse, I slept soundly as soon as I became used to the bare boards. When the forecastle-doors were shut, and the watch inside, the place was warm enough, notwithstanding the water pouring from the deck overhead. It was turn-in streaming, soak dreaming, and turn out steaming. The food was of the very worst description, and of the scantiest quantity; but it is not my purpose to give a log of the passage. In "On Blue Water" I have described a similar ship, so that if the reader has any curiosity to know more of the domestic economy

of such floating hells, I must refer him to that book.

Our captain and officers were of a class not uncommon in North America—more farmers than sailors. All the after-guard belonged to the same little township, and were more or less closely related. The captain and mate would talk to one another after this manner on the poop:

Captain: "How was beans looking up down your end this fall?"

Mate: "Don' know much about beans; but corn—— Oh hell!"

Captain: "Have a few showers like this around to hum neow, guess they'll start our turnips along."

Mate: "A few squalls like that last would bring that old mapple down at the bottom of the hum pastur. I was agoin' to fall it before I come away last time. The hired gall allows to be kind a scart, and goes round by the school-house to meetin'."

I have stood at the wheel and listened to stuff

something like this till I thought I must be in a backwoods settlement instead of on board a ship in the middle of the Western Ocean. When they were lying I could listen to them with patience. I dearly love a really good lie, and they did tell some that were not bad. Ghosts, spirit-rapping, and the like, were very frequently the subjects of their conversation.

One day, when I was at the wheel, I gathered from what I heard the mate telling the captain at different times, that many years of his early life had been spent in travelling about America on foot, as a peddler of nickel jewellery. In these wanderings, he said he had come to a small settlement out West, and seen this extraordinary manifestation: Every morning a coiled-up lasso would enter the town, moving along in the air at about the same height from the ground as it should had it been suspended at a horse's saddle, but no horse or man was visible; it would pass backwards and forwards about the place until it came within reach of some living object, when it would make itself ready, swing

round in the air, fly out to its full extent, enclose its noose round a victim, become taut, and whisk a dog, cow, or prominent citizen away as fast as a horse could gallop—no other agent being visible but the normally inanimate lasso. The captain agreed it was a wonderful manifestation; but he declared he had seen just as strange a thing. He was loading mahogany in Central America, and had visited a logging-camp. In the middle of this camp there had once grown a large mahogany-tree, eighteen feet in circumference; after the tree had been felled, the stump had been smoothed and polished, and used *in situ* as a camp-table. One day an old nigger told the captain to lay his hands, their fingers touching, on the table. He did so, and in about a minute the table turned right round. I believe the roots of a tree extend about as far in the earth as the branches in the air.

The mate commented: "And yet there's people'll say there's nothing in it!"

Little they thought, as they indulged their inherent tendencies to romance, that they were

going to see a manifestation of a kind that would surprise and terrify them more than anything they could imagine. We were about half-way across. The breeze had been freshening from the south-west since daylight. At eight a.m. a vessel, top-gallant up, was in sight in our wake, overhauling us hand over hand, apparently bringing up more wind with her. Our watch—the first mate's—went below at breakfast-time. About four bells we were called out—"All hands shorten sail!" We couldn't furl a cross-jack or take in a topgallant-sail without all hands—and somehow it always seemed to be our watch below. This arose from the fact that none of the other watch could speak English. The arrangement of putting all the foreigners in one watch and all the Englishmen in the other is very common, when there happen to be enough English-speaking men to make up a watch. It is done in the hope of setting up a spirit of rivalry between the watches, so making them work against one another, besides preventing any collusion between them for mutual protection. In our case the result was that when-

ever there was sail-trimming or shortening to be done, our watch had to be called up to interpret the orders to the other watch, or at least lead them to execute them.

By this time I had recovered a good deal of my bodily health. I was able to get about aloft, and take care of myself round the decks when she was shipping a lot of water; but I never recovered my spirits while I was in that ship. I passed through a most singular experience; all self-assertion seemed dead in me. I would bare a cuff or kick from the mate or second-mate without feeling any indignity or a particle of resentment. Even my sense of sympathy for others seemed numbed. I could see old Mike, at a time of life when the grasshopper is a burden, knocked down and kicked into the lee scuppers with the utmost indifference. The indescribable misery of the life did it—without rest or proper food, continuously exposed to wet and "Hawkins" (cold), who, as the nigger says, "Bite um no see him." One was called from sleep to go on deck with a resigned, hopeless sort of do-what

you-like-with-me feeling, such as I should think some men step on the scaffold with. I was "too cold for brave."

In the gale which I am now describing, though we passed through a most frightful peril, from the moment I came on deck at the setting in of the blow to the end, I was more callous than any eye-witness standing in safety could have been. It had freshened up very suddenly between eight a.m. and ten a.m., and looked like weather to the north-west, every gust seeming to come away harder and fiercer than the last. Great leaden folds of cloud were racing low down overhead "like vultures on their prey." The sea was high, dark, and angry, its curled heads giving those sharp premonitory lashes as the waves mounted one behind the other, straining towards their victim, and flinging out streamers of spray and spindrift high up in their eagerness to reach us. The darkness an hour before noon was enough to make any man feel that something out of the common was brewing, yet he kept swinging the main-topgallant-sail on her. I

had been up to the mizzen-topgallant-sail making it fast, and saw that the vessel coming up astern was now hull up. I made her out to be one of the old frigate-built English ships. She, too, was carrying on the same sail as ourselves, which made me almost doubt my judgment; if the signs were as threatening as they appeared to me, it looked like nothing less than madness not to be snugged down. I could not understand such cracking on; it blew a whole gale, and here we were tearing before it as fast as wind could drive the old barn. She was straining and shuddering as the gale whistled and hummed through her pitch-pine spars, half burying herself at every plunge ahead.

The seas were running in over both sides, keeping the deck full. Once the top of a heavy sea came aboard the weather-bumkin, and a lot of water went down the cabin skylight. I and two or three others were called aft to put the covers on. I had an opportunity of seeing what the captain looked like, and hearing him express some of his opinions. He seemed quite cheerful—didn't seem to under-

stand the danger in the least. The mate, too, appeared not to know that we were carrying on a press of canvas enough to turn a man pale to look aloft. I heard the captain say, alluding to the other vessel, now not more than a mile astern on the weather-quarter, "That old Britisher sails, but I guess our cotton'll hold as long as his hemp." I thought to myself, "You must be a pair of raving lunatics, both cotton and hemp." I saw also that the other ship had her ensign up, the English flag. It was more like a time to be heaving the ship to than to be flag-wagging. I heard the mate draw the captain's attention to the colours, and the captain say, "I'm not going to have my ensign blown to rags a day like this. Anyhow, I can't make his colours out end on; wait till he comes abreast." The ship was nearly dead to windward, which made his colours blow straight towards us, so that it would have been difficult to make out code-signals.

At seven bells we were sent to dinner, just as though it were the finest of weather. During the

half-hour we were at dinner the wind increased in violence, and the sea got up, running even faster and more confused. I had finished a plate of pea-soup, and stepped out on deck to hold my plate under a stream of water pouring in over the bulwarks to wash it. As I did so I looked at the ship, now nearly abreast, not a quarter of a mile off. Her ensign was still run up. I saw a crowd of people on the poop, among them, I thought, a woman. It appeared to me that the man must want to run his ship under. The wind actually seemed to pant in short savage gasps as it tore overhead. The sense of pressure seemed communicated to one's self from the straining ship. I felt that every rag we had set was as good as condemned. Not a stitch would we ever be able to hand, now it had been carried on, till it would have to be carried off, and, likely enough, take the sticks with it. While I stood looking at the other ship, my plate in my hand, her stern rose on a sea and didn't come down again, but seemed to hang half a minute or so; then the sails came

flat aback, and with a send ahead she went down head first, her stern disappearing last, pointed up and down like a whale sounding, the people on the poop clinging to the taffrail. From the moment I saw her give the curious rise aft to the moment the ensign at her mizzen-peak sank in the sea, could not have been more than half a minute, hardly time to understand what was happening. A sea washed over me as I stood gazing at the part of the sea.

CHAPTER IX.

Hove-to by Accident—A Derelict—Ocean Cadgers—Consular Satisfaction—Run Out.

It is like a fairy-tale. When that great ship and all her lives and equipment disappeared in a moment, I finished washing my plate just as calmly as though I had been on shore instead of being within a measurable distance of a cataclysm. Then I went into the forecastle, and said to old Mike:

"That big Britisher's done an *Atalanta*."

"Hell she has?" said he; "and we're going the right way for it."

Then he came out on deck with me, and looked across the water as though he doubted me, as I almost did my eyes, it was so sudden. There was no confusion on board us, and for a quarter of an hour I thought that the people aft had not seen

the big ship sink; but in about five minutes after we came to understand the danger, then it was "Lower away the main-topgallant-sail!" The second mate went to the topgallant halliards, and took them off the pin; the yard would not come down, so we all "tailed on" the starboard clew-line. Now ten men, if they are only landsmen, all pulling together, mean some weight, and so the yard did come down by degrees. In getting the yard down, I had a chance to judge of the force of the wind; it was like water—solid water, I was going to say. When a ship is rushing before the wind in this way, one does not feel the wind, but you are aware of an oppression, a weight, as it were, in sympathy with the tenseness around; everything near is singing like harpstrings struck by a mighty hand. One is conscious of an irresistible power somewhere, but around and near, things are relatively calmly humming—if the expression "Now she hums" can be appreciated by a landsman. She did hum! As soon as the yard was down the mate went and started the starboard sheet. Something

like a volley of musketry followed, and a flock of wild-fowl shot ahead of the ship—fragments of the main-topgallant-sail. I watched the pieces go away out of sight, and then I turned round to Mike, who was near me, and said:

"More cunarders* for mosquitoes."

The allusion will, I am aware, not be understood on shore, therefore I must again explain.

Two American captains were once talking about wind, and one said, "I was caught in a squall under all sail in the Bay of Bengal, and before you could say 'Knife' there wasn't a rag to a jackstay."

The other skipper capped it with, "I guess I was to 'luward' o' you that time, 'cause a cloud o' skeeters come aboard me, and they all had canvas jumpers and pants on"—Queen Mab's "small gray-coated gnat" (?).

It was to that romance I referred when I said to Mike, "More cunarders for mosquitoes." Shortly after they struck eight bells. There is a belief

* Sailcloth jackets, so-called from the steam-ship company which introduced them.

among the men that a ship's bell will strike eight before she goes down. A foundering ship gives some heavy rolls, and may make her bell ring; but in this case the second mate struck the bell after the topgallant-sail went in tatters, just as regularly as he would have done if there wasn't a breath of air out of the heavens.

It was now our proper watch on deck, and Mike's trick at the wheel; but there were two hands grinding water for the captain's ducks, so I looked at Mike, and said:

"I suppose it's you and me for it?"

He nodded, and aft we went.

As we took the wheel from the other two foreigners, they wanted to spin a cuffer as long as a maintop bow-line, as though we hadn't met for a twelvemonth. I said to my fellow:

"Will you give her to me and git?"

Mike couldn't get his man to let go the spoke until he had pitched him a yarn. At last Mike got possession of his side of the wheel, and I looked over and asked him:

"Will you take her, Mike?" (Being before the wind there was no lee-helm.)

Mike answered me, "You're last from school." I knew what he meant, and so went right on the job.

It was a job! These N. S. ships are built this way: they go down about ten feet in ballast-trim, and then they won't displace another inch of water for a hundred tons of stuff in them. In ballast-trim they sail like witches, and would deceive the best man at the wheel, for they don't take half a spoke; but when deep as this waggon was, they do steer! If there happened to be two of them in the Atlantic Ocean at the same time, it would not be safe. For the first few minutes I had enough to do to watch her, and say, "Now, give us a heave, Mike;" but as soon as I got the run of her, I had a look round. The sea was running high, but more uniform; the wind had hold of it, and had taken the head off at the same time as it rose the long Western-ocean roller. I heard the roarers coming up astern, but dare not look at them, because if you do you feel

inclined to jump—it takes your attention away from the ship's-head; and the consequences might be so serious, that if you had as many lives as Plutarch, you would never hear one bell.

The old man and the mate were on the poop, and, I believe, temporarily insane. They were very pale, and the mate had the skipper by the arm, both of them looking upstairs, while I was practically demonstrating (the base being east-south-east), as fast as I could, that two sides of a triangle are greater than the third. I am sure that they were afraid to start a rope; they had carried on so long. The most fortunate thing was that it was daylight, and we could see enough to die. I thought of a telegram I once read in a daily:

"CORFU.—A large frigate-built single-topsail ship was seen running before a hurricane at midnight."

I knew that there could only be one single-topsail ship in that position, and her name was the *Atalanta*, and my cousin's husband was captain of her; and she was manned, or rather boyed, by a lot

of poor young fellows, who were inhumanly committed alive to the deep in face of the terrible, terrible example of the *Eurydice*.

But what is the sacrifice of eight or nine hundred bright young lives to the carrying out of a well-meant, but none the less ridiculously unpractical, fad of a wealthy amateur? Here were we in very much the same position as the *Atalanta* and *Eurydice* found themselves in. We had carried sail until we *could not* take it in. It was pretty certain that the wind would either take it away or take us away. If there had been any sailors in the ship, the canvas might have been cut away at the leeches, then with the yards braced up and with a tarpauling in the mizzen-rigging, she would have hove-to and weathered anything; but as it was, not a soul in the ship could get over the sheerpole, and the captain knew it. So no wonder he looked pale, and, likely enough, thought he was going after the Englishman he had just seen wiped out. I have since framed a theory that the Britisher was trying to signal us, knowing it was all up with him. She

was carrying on sail to overhaul us and communicate her number.

In the old bluff-bowed ships there used to be an accident called "starting the wood-ends." Where the planks were bent in to butt on the stem, with straining they would separate at the butts and open like *Bell's Life*. If a man knew that his wood-ends were going, he would be justified in doing anything to get himself reported as lost. This idiot that I'm grinding water for never took the ship's number nor answered her flag before she came aback. It was not wind that took her aback. I saw that after the thing happened, notwithstanding the hurricane after her, she took such a dive and send forward as she gave the last plunge, that she put her canvas to the mast as she over-ended. While I discuss this matter, let it be remembered that I am at the wheel steering like a fiend, throwing myself out of shape quicker than a lightning conductor, not wanting a monkey-jacket, though the wind is west-north-west, with hailstones. I had not been there half an hour, waiting for something and

watching those two men on the poop who did not know what would come of it, when the lower fore-topsailyard went in the slings, and the whole arrangement up forward followed, puff, like blowing the head off a dandelion, and down the wind it sailed as if it were half a dozen collapsed balloons. It altered the helm, but I was glad to see it go; it meant so much canvas off her, and would allow her to come up to the wind if the main would only go the same way. She was rolling the water in, in a way that promised either to swamp her, stave in the deck, or float all hands overboard. The boats forward went first, and then the break of the poop was breached out by the weight of water that got down the skylight and companion.

As the wreck passed astern, I gave one glance aside from the compass and said to Mike, "There goes American mixed drink." It did look a mixture—skylights, boats, books, tables, and chairs, all flying astern. I could see she would not last long now she had begun to break up. I thought, "We'll have daylight to stiffen in, this good day of our

Lord." Yet those people on the poop stood there like graven images, not a word out of them. It would not have made any difference if they had issued orders, for none of the men could have come aft from under the topgallant-forecastle, where they were crouching; and if they could have come aft they could not have executed the simplest order, they were so numbed with cold and fear. It must have been nearly four bells when the port main-sheet went with a bang that might have been heard from here, and all there was left of the mainsail was parcelling the fore-rigging. I hoped the main and mizzen topsails would follow; but no, they stood in the bolt-ropes.

The interest now ought to have centred in the pumps. It was highly probable that water was up to the beams in her, and the fish swimming in and out of her bottom. No occasion to sound the pumps; just put your leg down the main-hatch and feel the water, as they do in the timber-ships from Quebec. I did not know the moment she might not go down under us. It would have been

only hastening the end to start a tack or sheet; we could not have come up to the wind without getting mountains of water aboard. One little hope was left, that the wind might take off and the sea go down. It had come on so suddenly that it was not likely to last. Sudden blows seldom last. If things kept together until sunset, though it would be colder drowning, it would be hard living; for in the daylight, even standing with his back to the sea, it is a hard struggle for the man at the wheel not to look over his shoulder, "because he knows a frightful fiend doth close behind him tread"—that fiend of the nautical mythology, called David Jones, whose chill embrace is ever held open to us, and once taken seldom loosed. These and a thousand other uncomfortable thoughts and feelings force themselves upon a man as he waits his doom, notwithstanding that his every muscle is in action spinning the wheel up and down, or holding with might and main as she kicks.

I suppose it must have been about four o'clock, and I had been steering for four hours, when I felt

nearly done up. I knew that no one would come to relieve us, so I said to old Mike:

"You take her for a spell?"

Mike nodded to me.

When two or more men are at the wheel only one is steering; the others are only giving their strength to the one who does the head-work. When Mike took her I thought he was giving too much helm from nervousness, so I held against him a couple of times, but it only made him give her more helm. She flew up four points on her starboard helm; and as she returned to her course, answering the helm hard down, I tried to save her and take her from Mike, but it was too late. Before he righted the helm she passed her course and was off it three points, four points, five points—my heart came up in my mouth. She lay in the trough of the sea. The water hung over her in high green hills; the main and mizzen topsails fluttered harshly a moment, and then left in little tatters. All that was to be seen of them was two or three small scattered clouds of canvas whisked away

down the wind. Now she was under bare poles, excepting a mizzen-staysail we had set for steering, yards square, and wind abeam. She still kept great way on her.

The skipper and mate saw their opportunity, and were equal to seizing the occasion. They never spoke any order—just exchanged some remark between them, and ran to the wheel. Pushing Mike and I away, they spun the wheel hard down; she answered at once, bowed the sea, came up as she felt the mizzen-staysail. It should have been the foretopmast-staysail in such a blow, but fortunately was not, or she must have payed off to certain destruction. Without taking a spoonful of water aboard, she was safely hove-to by an accident of bad steering. In three or four minutes, from the most helpless impotence, blindly driving on fate, we found ourselves in safety. The officers regained their heads after four hours of speechless terror, drove the cowering wretches out on deck; let the main and mizzen yards go sharp up; and in about half an hour had the wreck of the fore-

mizzen-yard run over the side and the fore-yard lowered in. The wheel was then lashed hard down: and the captain said I like and I to leave it so, and go down on the main-deck with the steward and carpenter to see if anything could be saved from the wreck of the ruined cabin before dark. All one side of the front of the poop had been swept away, and the timbers washed overboard. The sail-locker and mate's cabin were on the inner side: but the pantry or cabin used as a storeroom for provisions and the second-mate's cabin were all gone, leaving nothing but the bare beams and planked upper works.

I heard that the steward and carpenter had been aft in the captain's stateroom when it happened, and that they started to run on deck as the water cleared off; but changing his mind, the steward, with nothing but a small beam over his head, called to the carpenter: "For God's sake don't go on deck." The shelter of the single beam is not, however, to be despised when things are expected down from overhead. It was laughable afterwards

—such things nearly always come out after moments of peril.

All night we were at it. A spare spar that would make a foretopsail-yard had to be brought out from the waterways ready for the carpenter to shape; lower topsails had to be bent in the night and set to ease her weather-rolls, which became heavy as the wind took off after sunset. Nothing had been cooked, so we made a miserable supper of hard bread and cold water about eight o'clock.

By daylight we were able to make sail, and put her before a moderate breeze. The wreck of one boat lay forward of the deck-house, and was not beyond repair; the others had all gone to pieces.

At noon we passed within a quarter of a mile of a derelict. She was a big Norwegian, evidently abandoned the day before in the hurricane. All her canvas but a rag as big as a bread-bag, hanging like a signal of distress to the mainroyal-yard, was gone. Before leaving her, her running-gear had been let go, as is customary, to ensure her breaking up. She looked a dismal spectacle. Everything

standing; but as she rolled deadly in the trough of the sea, her loosened yard swung backwards and forwards. The truss of the main-yard was gone, and the mast half cut through by the sawing yard, so that it must soon fall. While passing astern of her, we could see the rudder was gone, and the hatches blown up by the water and air in her. She was timber-loaded and water-logged, her deck about flush with the sea, which ran over so as almost to put her out of sight at times. She could not sink, but would break up and spread her timber over the sea. Some five winters ago there were so many of the abandoned water-logged ships reported about the chops of the Channel, that they became a most serious danger to navigation. So much so, that one of her Majesty's armoured "Impracticables," "Inexplicables," or similarly-named men-of-fight, went out to cruise for and sink them. I was told that she engaged one with her guns a whole day without making any apparent impression on the mass of floating timber, finally having to give up the attempt, and tow her into harbour

as indestructible. I only give this as a hearsay story, probably without a germ of fact, but the possibility of such an instance I can easily believe. The one we fell in with this time had been abandoned in a great hurry after losing some of her boats, for we saw the remains of an attempt to construct a raft on the poop, held there by tackles in the mizzen-rigging, probably intended to be used in launching it over the side.

It came out on board that all our small stores, coffee, molasses, tea, etc., besides all the beans in the ship, had been washed over the side out of the cabin, so that our—in any case—scanty provender was for the future to be considerably reduced.

Two or three more weeks without any remarkable event dragged themselves out—one continuous round of misery, which found us at length approaching Europe, and meeting a good many ships. One fine curiously calm winter's day, we were in company with two or three vessels, when the captain took it into his head to do a little cadging. Foreigners are the best ships to cadge from, especi-

ally the small ones. Provisions are often given away by them in sympathy for what they believe to be real misfortune, and payment will never be called for from the begging owners; while Englishmen, who know how ill-found some of their country ships are, always take care to secure payment. It is almost certain that if we had made a good passage, and had not lost anything, we would not have had enough provisions to carry us comfortably across. The first vessel we boarded was an Italian barque, seventy-two days from the River Plate. I was in the boat, and as soon as we dropped alongside, the captain invited our mate on board, and in a few minutes began handing down boxes and bags, a demijohn of wine or spirits, a large parcel of tobacco, and matches. Nobody forward ever saw any of the good things the Italian sent our captain with his compliments, and all sorts of polite expressions of sympathy. I have no doubt he was well laughed at in the cabin for his pains. Next we went alongside a Dutchman, and they never as much as threw us a rope. While we

were holding on to his chain-plates, the captain looked over the side, and said:

"I saw you just leave the Italian; you was short of stores?"

"Yes, captain," said the mate; "we have run out of pretty near everything but water."

"Das ist what I expecs. You wants a leedle vlour, and a parrel of pork, and a few raisins, and some sugar?"

"Yes, we'd be very much obliged if you could spare us them things," answered the mate, quite pleased.

I thought, "You're in luck, Mr. Mate!" but there was more coming.

The Dutchman went on to ask where we were from, where bound, and how many days we were out. The mate told all he asked, and then the Dutchman repeated the mate's words, trying in a ridiculous way to mimic his American accent.

"You left New York on the 20th of November, bound to Berghaven, and now you aar six veeks out, and havs nothing to eat. Didn't your captain think he might be six weeks coming over? No,

no, Mr. Mate; tell your captain dat little game was played out; I got nothings to give away. Dat dam English salt-water impostor!"

The mate looked small as we pulled back to our ship. I enjoyed a good laugh at him in my sleeve. It is a great pity there are not more men at sea who hold the Dutchman's views of an owner sending his ship to sea without sufficient food on board. For every day that a man is kept without food or drink on board a ship through the wilful neglect of his employers, he can legally claim only one shilling a day in compensation. Supposing he lasts five days (this is not an absurdly extreme case), he would have five shillings due to him for submitting to be starved to death. That was not to be our fate in this ship, although we came down to dry biscuit and water for the last week.

From the copy of the agreement that had been signed for me in New York, and which is placed in a part of the ship accessible to the crew, I learnt that I was supposed to have engaged myself for six months, or to be paid off at the captain's option

before that time expired. When we reached Berghaven, I had three weeks' pay due to me, and determined, bad as the ship was, to try and get it. I also persuaded old Mike to remain in the ship and endeavour to get his money. It is not usual. A man on our articles cannot claim his discharge, unless in a home-port, before the six months are up; and no captain ever intends to pay a cent until he is forced to. He generally makes the ship so hot that the men desert as soon as she is made fast on the first day in port, leaving such pay as may be coming to them behind. In Continental ports, almost all who have once allowed themselves to be put away in Western-ocean traders keep passing from one to another, hoping to get in one they will be able to remain in, often for years never seeing a shilling of wages more than a boarding-master may give them for their advance in the way already described. It is a most hopeless life; Dante's fourth circle is not unlike it in conception. I knew if I went on shore from this ship without money or clothes, I would, unless by the greatest

good luck, be driven into another almost as bad. So the first night Mike and I went to the captain and asked him to pay us off. I did not suppose he would, but it could do no harm to ask him, besides letting him know we were going to remain on board, so that he might get us something to eat. The captain told us it was no use our trying to stop in the ship for our money, for he had never paid a man more than a month's advance since he had been master of a ship, and didn't think he was going to begin now.

I told him I would see if I could not get my money, and old Mike said he would not leave her without his; and then we went forward, the captain laughing at us. In the forecastle we still had a few scraps of biscuit left, so we ate a little and turned in. Next morning, two hours before daybreak, on a frosty morning, we were turned out to draw water and wash her down and pump her out. I saw at once that we were to be run out, if driving could do it; but that only made me more obstinate. She had not, as a rule, made more water than a

soft-wood ship always does—about half an hour every watch; but the pump was very heavy for two hands to work. This took us an hour and a half every morning, then twenty minutes for breakfast, and up aloft. In three days old Mike and I had unbent all the canvas, sent down royal and top-gallant-yards, unrove and stowed away all the gear, working until long after dark in the evening, with only one other rest of twenty minutes for dinner besides the breakfast interval. Such food as we were given—a plate of dish-water and a small piece of gristle and bone!

The worst hardship was that we ran out of tobacco. I believe my mate might have hung on longer but for that. On the fourth night he went on shore to see if he could not get a chew. On shore he must have fallen in with some friend or shipmate, who gave him drink enough to send him on board again next morning two hours after I had been turned to, gloriously intoxicated. I knew then it was all up with him. I was up scraping the foretopmast when he came over the gangway.

I saw the mate go up to him as though saying something to him very sharply. Mike insulted him in some way, and the second-mate joined the row. I hoped that Mike would surely have enough sense to go into the forecastle and turn in; but no, he seemed to court a row, and got it. The mate left the second-mate talking to Mike, went for a heaver from the boatswain's locker, calling the captain on deck as he passed the fore-cabin door on his way back. I ran down the ratlines to the deck; but when I reached the quarter-deck, the mate had knocked Mike down with the heaver, and was kicking him. I said to the mate:

"You had better leave the man alone; he's drunk."

"You mind your own business," said the captain.

I could do nothing against the three of them, but I did say:

"I want to see the Consul, and won't do a hand's turn till I do."

"I'll talk to you about the Consul in a minute, as soon as I get this other fellow into irons."

They soon put Mike into irons, and carried him down into the cabin. I heard a good deal of row down below, swearing and thumping as though they were beating the poor old fellow unmercifully. There were a lot of German labourers on board discharging the cargo, so I went to one of them and asked if they would not interfere, but they would have nothing to do with it. After a time the captain came on deck, and called me to him. He asked me if I still wanted to see the Consul, and I told him I did. Without more ado, he gave me full permission, with orders to be back before noon, or he would have me found by the police and locked up as a deserter; he, at the same time, only wishing that I would desert.

At the Consulate I was shown in to the Vice-Consul, who listened to my story of the captain and mates beating the man and putting him in irons on board a ship in harbour. The Vice-Consul asked me if I thought the man was at that moment in irons. I told him I had seen him not more than an hour before put in them. The Vice-Consul

thought it important enough to tell the Consul about, for in a few minutes I was shown into another room, before the Consul. He asked me one or two questions of fact, and then appeared much annoyed. He said:

"I'm determined to do something to put a stop to this. Not a ship comes here from America without a case of this kind of brutality on board."

I was then told to wait outside. About a quarter of an hour after I was given a letter for my captain, and told to take it on board at once. I went straight back and gave the captain the letter. I suppose it contained an order to release Mike, and a message to the master to come to the Consulate.

The captain only laughed as he read it, and then said:

"I suppose you reckon you're doing a smart trick?"

He then turned to the mate, and said:

"Get that fellow plenty of work. See if you can't give him Consular satisfaction."

"All right," said the mate; "come along with me."

Before many minutes I was slung over the bows in a bowline, chipping the chain bobstay. This is a very ingenious torture. You sit in the noose of a rope, which cuts into you after a time. No man can refuse to do it. It looks so easy and simple, and frequently is quite a necessary thing to do for as much as half an hour; but after you have tried it for half an hour, you begin to know what hanging must be like. I suffered hours of this torture sooner than refuse duty and risk imprisonment, or lose my case before the Consul. By dint of a number of contrivances, such as doubling the rope under me, and bearing my weight on other supports near, I managed to pull through the day. I was at last allowed to knock off when it was quite dark. In the forecastle I found Mike; he had been let out as the captain went on shore to see the Consul, on receipt of the letter I brought him. The old fellow was in his bunk, sober, sick, sorry, and covered with blood from a number of cuts on his

head and face. He still had the hand-shackles on, which I took upon myself to relieve him of from one wrist by means of a piece of wire worked down on the screw and drawn up. It is simply done, but not easy to describe to anyone who does not know the mechanism of the catch.

Next morning, the mate took the irons off Mike's other wrist, and told us we must be up at the Consulate at ten o'clock, leaving the ship at nine. We were, I must admit, two very disreputable-looking characters, for we had on worn-out clothes, and were given no time to clean ourselves. On the way up, I stopped at a boarding-house, and persuaded three of the worst marked of the old hands to come up to the Consul with us to bear out my testimony as to the general treatment we had received while in the ship. This took a few minutes longer than I had expected, so that we were ten minutes late when we arrived at the Consulate. The Vice-Consul, as soon as we were ushered in, asked us why we had not come when ordered. I told him that we had not been allowed

to leave the ship until after nine, and that I had afterwards been delayed in finding the three witnesses with me.

"You're too late; I don't think the Consul will hear you. The captain and mate have been here and gone."

However, after a little hesitation, we were taken before the Consul. As we entered the room, he looked up hastily, and said:

"I have seen the captain, and he tells me quite a different story. Go back to your ship, and don't let me see any of you here again."

I made an attempt to point out, as spokesman, that all the men bore traces of having been assaulted. The three young boys I had brought with me all had the remains of black eyes, and though Germans in Germany, they could get no redress. The Consul would not listen to a word I had to say, but summarily dismissed us with: "I believe, from what the captain has told me, that you are a thoroughly bad lot; and if you do not go back to the ship, I will have you locked up."

There was nothing to be done then. They can't put me in prison, as the man said, when he was looking out through the bars. We left the office crestfallen enough. Mike said he would not go on board again, and I thought he was right not to, so said good-bye to him, and went back myself. On board the captain said he hoped I had had enough of the Consul; and I could not help thinking that I had. I was none the less determined not to give in. I knew that all the time they were persecuting me they had to watch me, and hours were just as long to them as to me. Besides, the ship was going into dry dock, and under repairs, which would detain her a long time in port; so that after all, I being the only man on board, they might see the advisability of paying me. Some of the tricks played on me were wonders of ingenuity. I was sent up to paint the yards, and given a pot brimful, holding about two gallons of paint, to take up on the topsail-yard. I carried it up in the top, and then filled a little tin out of it to lay out on the yards with. After I had painted a yard in from

the yard-arm, one of them would sing out that there was a "holiday"—a bare place left at the yard-arm —and I would have to lay out over the wet yellow paint, covering myself with the greasy filth. I am just as much at my ease aloft as on a side-walk when in my usual state of fitness at sea; but I confess that looking down on the hard cobble-stones of the dock-side off those oily fresh-painted yards made me hold on. If anyone should care to know what it is like to fall from aloft, I can tell exactly, for I have experienced it. I was slung in a bowline at the foremast-head, a height of about forty-five feet from the deck. I was working hard at the time, thinking about nothing but my work, when I felt and heard a snap; I knew the rope had parted, and I was flying downwards. I had not time to speak, or even be frightened; it was all over before my nerves had time to receive a painful shock. I remember the bang, and that I landed on my hands and feet, but was unconscious before I knew any pain. When I came to, I was lying on my back, and all hands standing round me. The

sensation was one of extreme exhaustion enjoying the most delicious repose. I only wished to be left alone for the present. I was offered water, which I did not desire, and felt irritated by attentions. I was pressed to say if I was hurt, so, much against my will, I tried to sit up. I then found that my right leg and left arm were immovable, and I could not get off my back. I was carried to my bunk, and felt no pain whatever until twenty-four hours after. The pain for the next three days was very great; but the fall itself, which did such injury to a leg and arm that I was kept on my back for six weeks, was a trifle that I assure the reader has no terrors. I think the consciousness of being above the yielding, moving water, must help in giving young sailors the confidence they acquire aloft in all weathers.

After the cargo was all out, and I had done all that could be done aloft, I was put on scraping the hold and 'tween decks. I accomplished that single-handed, and saw that they were really coming to the end of their resources, for they dogged me

much less as time wore on. Three or four times the second-mate asked why I did not clear out. He said the ship would be three months in port, and it was not likely the captain would keep me by the ship all that time doing nothing. Every time he spoke in that way I told him, knowing it would go to the captain's ears, that I would only be too glad to go if the captain would pay me what was coming to me.

The nearest they came to beating me was one night when a boarding-house tout came on board, and got into conversation with me, by giving me a plug of tobacco. It was a godsend, and I could not resist it. I knew it was not given me for nothing; but believing that there were too many sailors on shore for him to be after me, I let him make friends with me, and talked for more than an hour about things in general. At last he asked me to come on shore for a walk; it was late in the evening, and I knew that I would not be missed, as I had never gone on shore before, for my own pleasure, in my own time. I went with him. At

the nearest public-house he took me in and gave me a drink; but I took care to have nothing that would do me any harm. Finally, he asked me to come across the river to his house. Though this was certainly a give away, it was so long since I had heard a civil word from another man, I agreed to risk it, and crossed the river with him by the ferry.

In the house I met several other sailors, and joined in a game of cards. At last I asked what o'clock the last ferry I could return by crossed the river. I was told eleven o'clock. It was then ten by the clock overhead. There was time for one more game, and then I must get back. At half-past ten I rose to go. Then the "runner" told me the clock was half an hour slow. I had just missed the last ferry back to the dock, and would have to sleep in his house that night. I saw that he must have been put up to this little trick, but there was still a chance. The boats began crossing next morning at five o'clock, therefore I could easily reach the ship in time not to be reported as a deserter.

When I got back to the ship I found my way into the forecastle without being seen come on board, nobody being up. I was not turned to at the usual time, from which I concluded that they didn't expect to find me on board on this morning. After waiting an hour to be turned to, I went on deck of my own accord. As soon as the mate saw me he looked a little surprised, and asked me if I had not been on shore the night before. I only replied, "I was on board in time to turn to this morning." He could say nothing to that, so turned me to; but he seemed to have lost heart about driving me. He did not seem to care whether he gave me anything to do or not. The second-mate, I found, had been ashore all night, and had not yet returned to the ship. The very trick that had been played me had been tried on him with better success, for he never returned to the ship again.

All that day I did just what I liked. In the evening the mate came forward, and said to me: "Look at haar, Murtagh; do you know how much you have coming to you?" I knew to a dollar. I

had been three months in the ship at thirty dollars a month, which, deducting the thirty dollars I was supposed to have received in advance on the other side, left me sixty dollars due. I told the mate sixty dollars was what I wanted out of the ship.

"You see the second-mate has had to go without his money. If I give you ten dollars, will you clear out?" the mate proposed.

Ten dollars was something; it would make me independent of any more advances, and give me a chance to choose my own ship. I thought a moment before I answered him. He added to his former offer: "If you do stay in the ship until the articles run out, you needn't expect that you'll get such big wages as you signed for. Those wages are kept up for boarding-masters."

I saw he had been drinking a little, but knew he was only speaking the truth. I said, "I'll give you an answer in the morning, sir."

There was a Belgian steamer close alongside us. I had often spoken to the boatswain of her, and thought I stood a good chance of getting in her, as

she signed in a couple of days. Next morning, before I saw our mate, I told the boatswain of the steamer of the offer that had been made me. He said he would speak to his mate for me, and almost promised me that I could come straight aboard and turn to. So much business done, I told our mate that if he was still of the same mind about the ten dollars, I would take it and go. He told me I could pack up and get ready at once; he would get the money from the captain when he came on board to breakfast. Before that time came I had seen the mate of the steamer, and he had engaged me to come on board at once. So I was at last "run out;" but I made a hard fight, and came off better than any of the other poor fellows did, who are, in all probability, still working for Continental and American boarding-masters.

Where are all the smart lieutenant-commanders who have been buried in diving-bells, until compulsorily retired on a pittance in the prime of life, or shelved on coastguard stations to blue-mould? Why are not some of them in Antwerp, Hamburg,

Havre, or the like places? Many of them spend years on the remote Guinea coast and Pacific stations as the only representatives of British law and authority—performing the very judicial duties which would best fit them for such posts as vice-consuls.

END OF VOL. I.

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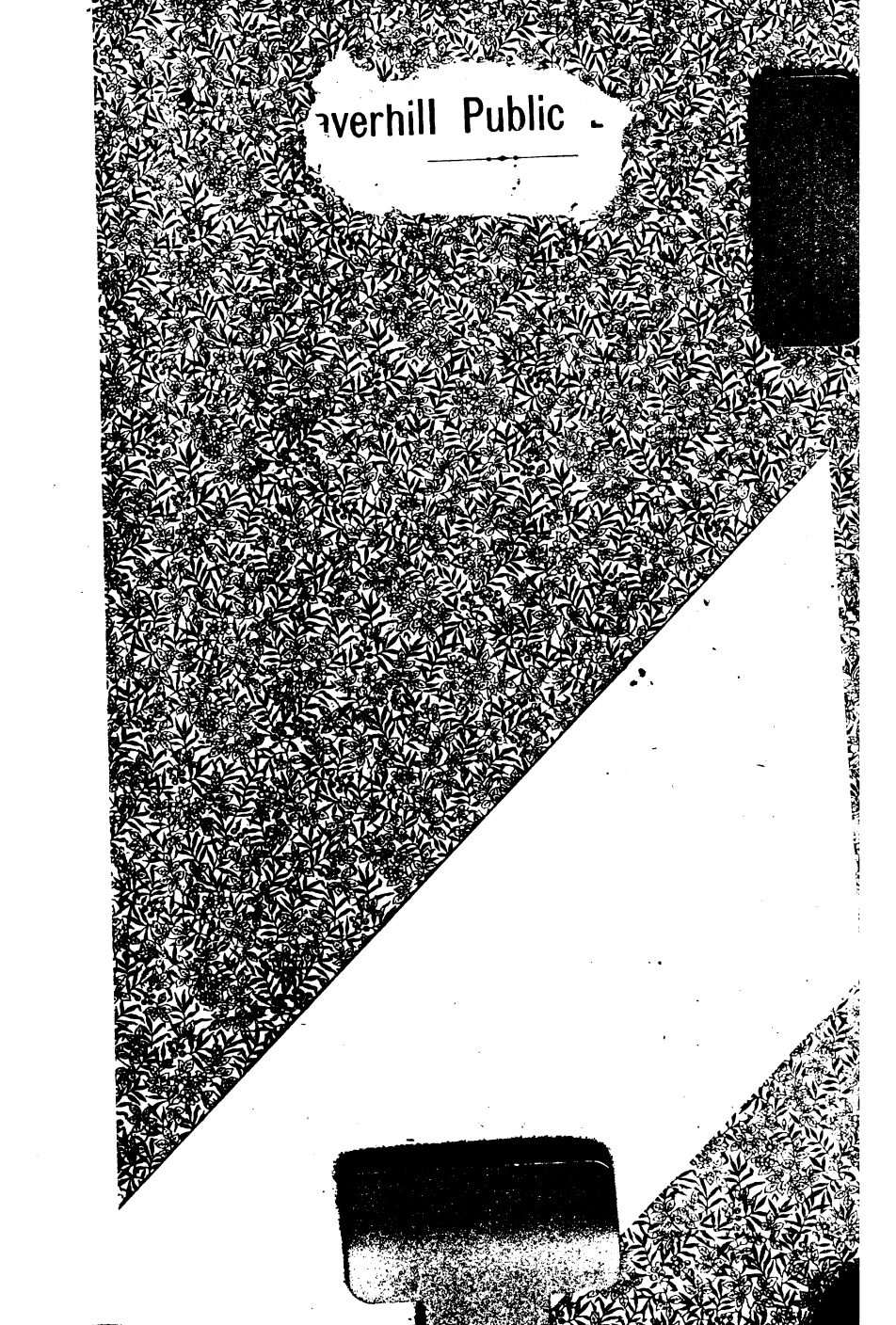
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